

Argentine Diary

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Argentine Diary

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE
COMING OF FASCISM

BY Ray Josephs

With a foreword by ALLAN CHASE



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FIRST PRINTING



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DEDICO este volumen a los periodistas de la Argentina, cuyo espíritu es incansable, cuya resolución de restituir la democracia en la patria atormentada jamás ha vacilado, y sin cuya cooperación no hubiera sido posible recopilar este material, con la esperanza de que la difusión de lo mucho cuya publicación les es prohibida, contribuya al restablecimiento de las libertades por cuya defensa luchan valientemente.

TO the newspapermen of Argentina, whose spirit is unflagging, whose determination to restore democracy to their troubled land has never faltered, and without whose help this Diary could not have been written, this book is dedicated in the hope that the world's knowledge of some of those things which they themselves could not print may help restore the freedoms for which they are fighting.



FOREWORD

By Allan Chase

We are winning the war in Europe, holding our own in Asia and losing the peace in Latin America. Under our uplifted Anglo-Saxon noses, more than one Latin-American nation has already taken the fascist plunge and others are getting set to follow. Latin America is a lot closer to us, physically, than Pearl Harbor or Dieppe. Which means that if most of Latin America goes fascist, particularly if our appeasement of Spanish fascism at the same time permits Spain to come out of this war as a disguised fascist state (England wants a monarchy in Madrid and Washington is toying with a number of Spanish Girauds and unhorsed Lavals yclept Jordana, Beigbeder, and Gil Robles)—well, it means a third world war in less than twenty years. Because any fascist state in Spain, no matter who *thinks* he is the father, will remain a state under control of the German chemical, industrial and financial cartels. And the unique characters who run these outfits get an itch to conquer the world every twenty years.

If this third world war is prevented, it will be because those wonderful Spanish republicans who tried their damndest to knock off Hitler at the very start of World War II will, within the next twelve months, succeed in establishing a Spanish Republic and hanging not only Franco but also all the fascist fakers who have

such high standing with men like Carlton Hayes and Samuel Hoare. It will also be because warnings such as the one so powerfully worded by Ray Josephs in this book will reach enough American ears.

Josephs has been covering what my friend John Lear correctly terms "The Forgotten Front" of this war since the day, well before Pearl Harbor, when he flew to Buenos Aires as a gringo reporter and remained to become one of the few serious American journalists to cover Latin America in the past decades. Today, if men like Josephs and Allen Haden of the *Chicago Daily News* were to leave Latin America, we would be left with scarcely an American observer on the scene who—to my knowledge at least—is capable of evaluating and reporting the momentous news of the day.

A word about gringos with portable typewriters. There are three kinds of gringo writers who destroy our prestige in Latin America. There are, in order of undesirability, the (1) one-country blitzer, (2) the all-country blitzer and (3) the gringa, or the female of the species. The one-country blitzer is a modest fellow who, armed with a contract from a weekly magazine, a letter from a book publisher and a rare capacity for liquor, descends upon a given Latin-American nation (generally Mexico), talks to the American Ambassador, the heads of the local American-British colony, to the country's leading fascists (who are generally well-heeled and of course deny that they are fascist), to the editor of the nation's largest newspaper (generally owned by a Spanish Falangist) and then produces (a) an interview with the nation's President for the magazine and (b) a book analyzing the nation's history, culture and total unreadiness for democracy and a high standard of living, particularly high wages. Naturally, this pundit speaks not a word of Spanish, nor does he make any attempt to find out what the common people think. Neither do the all-country blitzer (2) or the gringa (3) know the language or meet the people. It takes the one-country blitzer about two weeks to "do" a country; the all-country blitzer spends at least five weeks touring the twenty nations of Latin America, and it is a canard to say that he spends all of his time in airplanes; sometimes the weather forces him to spend a day on the ground, generally in a bar.

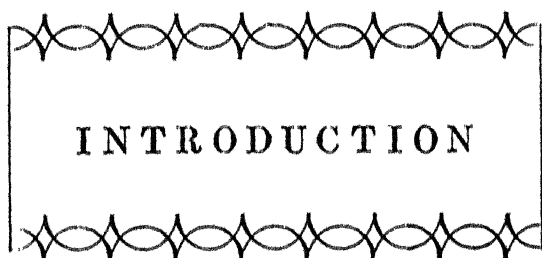
Ray Josephs, who will be celebrated in future histories of jour-

nalism as one of those hardy pioneers who proved to Latin Americans that not all *yanqui* reporters are gringos, also proves in this book that the problems of Latin America are not quite as simple as the gringos would have you believe. He also proves that the problems of our sister Republics are also our problems. Particularly the problem of fascism.

I know that it sounds old hat, but fascism is still the Number One problem of the world. Ray Josephs, in this book, has analyzed and chronicled the story of the coming of fascism in Argentina. It is a story which should be made part of the common knowledge of all Americans, particularly those who make our foreign policy. And, as Josephs tells it, it is a story which never becomes dull. This, I imagine, is because Josephs has a very lively style and also because he is a man of parts. He is, at one and the same time, the Argentine correspondent for *PM* and *Variety*—which means that in the heat of a political crisis Josephs can and does receive cables from both editors. *PM*'s Vic Bernstein will want to know "Inner significance latest Perón decree in re university curriculae" while *Variety*'s Abel Green will demand of Josephs the answer to "How's by Hollywood pix with hix in stix?" You will find the answers to both questions in the pages of this book.

Few books on the course of this war affect Americans as directly as does *Argentine Diary*. It is beyond doubt one of the most valuable books written by an American since this war began; that it should at the same time be entertaining is merely an added attraction.

New York, April 19, 1944



INTRODUCTION

Two earth-shakers hit Argentina the warm night of January 15, 1944.

The whole flat *pampa*, the Andes from La Quiaca down to the extreme tip of remote Tierra del Fuego, quivered with the vomiting of the earth below, and all Argentina trembled.

The second earth-shaker packed just as much of a punch, but its effects were not so immediately apparent. It wasn't until ten days later that our hemisphere's lone neutral was jolted off the fence to which it had clung with bitter-end desperation.

In point of immediate importance on that night of January 15th, the blow of the quake up in the little wine-pressing town of San Juan in the rich Mendoza district crowded everything out of the way. But as the inner circle of Argentina's new military regime—in locked-door session in Buenos Aires' ancient Casa Rosada—desperately telephoned and radioed for more details of the *terremoto* that had in less than a minute crushed San Juan into a horrible mass of dead and dying under broken buildings, there was another thought on their minds: a virtual ultimatum from the United Nations had arrived a few hours before, making it clear that the Argentine mask of neutrality, which gave the Axis its last gateway to the hemisphere, would have to be dropped, and that it was now or never.

Of the two earth-shakers, the one that worried the Argentine *militares* most was the latter. Rich, bountiful Argentina, they were certain, would know how to take care of the still-uncounted San Juan victims. In fact, the quake might turn out to be a pretty good thing politically, for, if handled properly, it could, in the common name of humanitarianism, provide a golden opportunity to enlist support from the increasingly growing opposition to the military regime.

—But the ultimatum—that was another thing! Abandoning neutrality—which first looked like abandoning the Axis—might pitch the Government of the *coroneles* (the notorious Colonels' GOU [Grupo Oficiales Unidos]) from power; it might even put an end to the kind of authoritarianism they were planning for Argentina and for Latin America.

Less than a month has passed as this is being written. The count of San Juan's dead and injured has exceeded even the most pessimistic estimates of that shock-filled night of January 15th. Argentina, firmer than ever in the grip of her self-imposed, strong-arm regime, has rounded up shelter and care for the victims, pulled up her sleeves to rebuild the stricken city and rebounded without difficulty.

The ultimatum has also been met. Argentina has officially severed her diplomatic ties with Berlin, Tokyo and their satellites; but the *coroneles*, although they wobbled and shook, have also taken this in their stride and, as with the quake, have turned it to their own advantage.

What is happening and has happened in Argentina is fully as important to the hemisphere as anything that occurred before the Axis diplomats were handed their passports and bid a hesitant *adios* at the Palacio San Martín.

Argentina remains the Number One hemisphere question mark. And the questions so increasingly posed in Buenos Aires still cast an ominous shadow over the Americas. For the issue boils down to this: Are we going to win the war and lose Latin America to the fascists?

There is no denying that Argentina's break with the Axis is a definite victory for Pan-Americanism. Officially, the Axis gangplank to the New World has been hoisted. But the Trojan horse seems to

have been rolled in already and set up alongside Buenos Aires' flower-bedded Plaza Mayo. And the new kind of nationalist, militarist, Nazi-fertilized brand of fascism clamped on Argentina, and already seeping over the borders into many another Good-Neighbor Republic, continues a live and actual threat to everything for which we and our United Nations allies are fighting.

Since fascism is the fundamental issue of this World War, we who look forward to building a system of durable world peace can hardly afford to ignore this consuming weed in our own back yard. And while the fight to rid the world of fascism draws closer to victory, the battle to root it from our hemisphere has hardly begun.

Step by step, almost as if following a specially prepared blueprint, the Argentine military oligarchy has been imposing a Hitler-Mussolini-Franco way of life on Argentina, far more dangerous than the liberty-restricting Castillo Government it replaced. In the beginning, it offered promises; then it took stronger measures. Everything it does not like is labeled "communist" and liquidated or abolished. First it disposed of Argentina's Congress, then the State or Provincial Governments, next the democratic organizations and subsequently the leaders of democracy's forces. The political parties have been dissolved to lay the groundwork for a State party "New Order," and with it has been imposed a tighter and tighter, vise-like control of the press, the radio, of liberty of expression and freedom of assembly. Private enterprise and individual labor unions have ceased being either private or individual.

There are those who pass this off as simply the old-fashioned, South American pattern of dictatorship, regrettable but not serious. But it is far more; it is a growing obstacle to the development and progress of the free men of the Americas. Its causes, its pattern and its future possibilities have been different from those of any other nation in our hemisphere. Yet there are similar factors existent elsewhere in the Americas, and the virus in Argentina's fascism is strong, tenacious, subtle and contagious, if unchecked.

The Americas and the world have been watching Argentina with increasing fear since that mild morning of June 4, 1943, when a comparative handful of self-righteous *militares* marched a few thousand troops into the tree-lined Plaza Mayo, walked out on a balcony of the Casa Rosada—Argentina's pink White House—and pro-

claimed to a hopeful but bewildered throng that destiny had at last tapped them to rule the country, save its honor and stamp out its decadent liberalism. The world has been unable to understand how a tiny military clique in worldly-wise Buenos Aires could pick such an outmoded way of life as fascism at the very moment when civilized men had pronounced totalitarianism on the verge of collapse. Some feel the choice was a sign of political stupidity, of putting the pesos on the losing horse almost at the finish line. But they have not understood the Argentine militarists and the anti-democratic forces which helped produce them.

This book is one small effort to provide part of that understanding. It is the diary of eight months in Argentina—a record of what you might have seen and heard and felt had you been there with me—but it is far more than that.

The fascism that flowered in Argentina in 1943 is not today's doing and has undergone no changes since Argentina cut her Axis ties. Those of us who lived and wrote in Buenos Aires saw it coming. It was no mere crystal-ball gazing. The mould had been cast long before Der Fuehrer, Il Duce and *El Caudillo* made it notorious. The Axis model, catalogued and directly quoted for the Rio de la Plata by Nazi-fascist and Spanish Falangist propagandists and fifth columnists, had new gadgets and a special discount, however. Anxious to establish the bridgehead for totalitarianism in the Americas, the Nazis started on Argentina soon after they seized power. Wilhelmstrasse's plans for Latin America haven't exactly been a secret either. Yet millions of Argentines and other Latin Americans, and more important those who should have been their leaders, seemingly haven't recognized them, or, recognizing, have not fought them. What's more—and this is what hurts—we *norteamericanos*, while basically successful in some other Republics of the Americas, failed to start early enough, or work hard enough. We failed to help consolidate and convince the vast majority of pro-democratic Argentines, not merely that our way should be their way, but that it was up to them to do the job themselves. We have also failed to demonstrate that freedom and a free world do not come on silver platters, stacked on an ample victory buffet from which anybody can help himself once the legions of democracy have licked the Nazis and the Japs.

We still have not reached or dynamically inspired our true friends in Argentina, and the task, especially now, is no longer easy. For the military gang in control has determined not merely to impose its own will on Argentina and preserve privilege—its own privilege—by fascist methods, but, disregarding the death struggle outside her borders, is playing the balance-of-power game again, seeking to replace hemisphere solidarity with her own brand of ganging-up, professing friendship but quietly plotting to sabotage Uncle Sam.

Spain should have given us a lesson. By allowing the dictatorships to capture Spain, while we self-complacently held off in accordance with strict non-belligerency, we helped start the avalanche that brought on the present war. Latin America and especially Argentina knew and felt and understood what happened in Spain. The Argentine people were with the Loyalists. But when we stood back and let the dictators move in, we not only crushed the hopes of the freedom-loving masses of Spain, and of future peace, but of the anti-fascists in Latin America. And we helped nurse the ambitions and desires of the military, of the reactionary elements, civil and clerical. There is plenty of evidence to prove the links between the very kind of military regime Franco imposed on Spain and that which his imitators worked up for Argentina. It is all there: the Axis-aiding neutrality, the suppressions of the Four Freedoms, the witch-hunting of every liberal element on the charge of communism, the anti-Semitism and the compulsory teaching of Madrid's style of Roman Catholicism.

Argentina and Latin America are not Spain—they are closer, more important to us. President Roosevelt's Good-Neighbor policy has been predicated on non-interference in Latin America's internal affairs. Yet we lost the track in Argentina when the Ramírez dictatorship took over and we made delivery of our recognition without the payment of real pro-democratic pledges. We followed the same line of appeasement we had followed in Spain. We appeased Argentina, and even though Argentina no longer openly appeases Hitler & Co., it is doing Hitler's work under the surface.

The inspiration for this military order of things in Argentina has not come from within the country itself. The Argentine people have not produced it, but the military mind is something else again, and the Nazis have played upon the pride, suspicion and personal ambi-

tions—stressing our own past errors—to develop what they wanted. We mustn't forget that the Nazis never give up the idea of the next chance; even if they lose this war, they plan, as in the past they planned, to use Latin America 'as the springboard for the next try.

The Argentine question is still many questions. A securely entrenched minority has control of Argentina today, a powerful, dangerous minority. Argentina is not the only Latin-American country with a militarily run dictatorship, for in the school of democracy most of Latin America remains in the kindergarten class.

Argentina's attempt to spread her military-style dictatorship to the rest of the Americas was only in its early stages when the Axis break came. But enough has happened so far to show its direction and to prove that cutting the official Axis links will not halt it. Whether it's enough to make us realize that action, vital action, is necessary now is another question. Argentina's military lost no time in getting under way its efforts to establish its own Latin-American bloc. Fascist elements elsewhere in Latin America had long been in touch with similar groups in Argentina and through them with the Argentine Colonels' GOU. But it took the Argentine coup—and most of all, its quick acceptance by the rest of the Americas—to start the ball rolling. Once the dominant elements in the GOU seized control, pushed out those of their rivals who favored going along with the United Nations and the United States and made certain of their hold by a gradual campaign of repressions and liquidations of the opposition, the intensive development of the Argentine bloc began.

Several months before a tiny military group in high, mountain-ringed, landlocked La Paz threw out President Peñaranda, the Bolivian nationalist leader, Victor Paz Estensoro visited Buenos Aires, studied the GOU methods at first hand and returned home with word that the Argentine military would stand by when *Der Tag* came. Similar groups of fascists have been in Buenos Aires since, and today they are back in their own countries. Coup attempts have already been tried in Chile, in Peru and elsewhere.

The "better explanation department" headed by Argentina's new Ambassador in Washington, Adrian C. Escobar, has sought to pool-pooch some of the "misunderstandings" which *norteamericanos* have somehow picked up about affairs in Buenos Aires. Certain moves

have been made which are meant to be interpreted as showing the regime really has its heart in the right place. But can the military regime be believed? What does the record show? What is the political philosophy of the leaders, and what are their ultimate goals? Can we bring the Argentine military around to our way of thinking or can we persuade the Argentine people to do the job?

These are vital questions—and they are questions of special concern to the United States. Anybody who knows the situation in Argentina and does not attempt to gloss over realities cannot close his eyes to the fact that the guiding and important element in Argentina's longtime attitude toward us has been suspicion, jealousy, resentment, misunderstanding and, to a varying degree, dislike of the United States.

Cornered into a position where there was no choice but to break with the Axis, or with the United Nations, the *militares*' inner resentment of the United States has increased even more. The Argentine desire to remain itself, to grow, perhaps stumblingly and with many mistakes, but to do it on their own, within the spirit of their own racial characteristics, religion and constitution, has been seized upon by the military to drive home its own fascist program. And the United States approach, well intentioned and excellent as it has appeared to us, has failed in Argentina's case because it has tried to create the feeling of the Americas as one happy family.

In the minds of many Argentines—not all but too many—we have acted the tutor to a lot of pupils, and that has offended Argentine dignity, of which no people are more conscious; Argentine pride, of which few people have more, as well as given the ever-watchful Nazis—who have by no means closed up shop in Latin America—the best kind of opportunity for their work. The Argentine military—quietly, although it was no secret—has, like the Nazis, sought to foster a distrust of the United States, not only for its own benefit, but because it helped provide the breeding ground from which they hope some day to spawn an anti-*yanqui* Latin America. They are using it to turn the people of Latin America against the things for which we are fighting, seeking to spread the belief that we desire to expand our holdings in the Americas, that we use the Monroe Doctrine to protect Latin America from all foreign influence but our

own, that we champion liberty but want to control and use Latin America.

We have determined never to return to the system of dollar diplomacy, to *yanqui* imperialism and the send-the-Marines tactics of old. But we haven't convinced the Argentine people that such is our course, now, *mañana* or the day after.

Until January, 1944, there was a tendency in the States to divide all Latin America into two camps: Argentina and the others. Pan-American unity became our pride and joy, partially because we did not examine it too closely.

Prior to September, 1930, when a military coup led by General José Uriburu seized power in Buenos Aires, Argentina was a democracy. The Uriburu revolt ended such democracy as there was in Argentina, ended it as surely as did Thyssen and Krupp the day they decided to throw their powerful fortunes behind Adolf Hitler in Germany. To be sure, it was ten years or more between the hour Germany's big business started to support Hitler and that crimson second when the Reichstag burst into flames. Nearly thirteen years were to elapse between the Uriburu coup and the Colonels' revolt which finally brought fascism to Argentina.

The only Argentina I have ever known has been a post-Uriburu Argentina. I watched it pass—inevitably, it seemed—from what may be called a stage of "soft" or neo-fascism to "hard" or full-dress fascism. I saw what happened to a Latin-American nation when the forms of democracy were transformed to hollow mockeries, when it was subjected to the corrosive influences of Axis fascism as transmitted through Italian, Nazi and, above all, Falangist Spanish organizations, and when, through it all, the foreign policies of our own country played into the hands of those foreign enemies who were bringing fascism to Hispanic America. It was an ugly process to watch.

The Uriburu revolt of 1930 had its seeds in World War I, which saw one-sixth of the world turn to socialism and the reactionaries of the rest of the world turn to fascism as the only means of retaining what was theirs. In some quarters, such as in Italy and Finland, fascism came in immediately. In other countries—France, Germany, Spain, to name but three—the reactionaries had harder

sledding. France had her traditions, and Spain was a nation so bent on national liberation that her people overthrew both the neo-fascism of Primo de Rivera and the monarchy of Alfonso de Bourbon. Germany was pushed into fascism in 1933.

Long before 1933, Germany's reactionaries looked to fascism to achieve power not only in Germany, but also in many other parts of the world. The chemical, industrial and financial cartels which helped to create Hitler started to prepare the groundwork for world hegemony almost at the same time that they began the work of destroying the Weimar Republic.

One of the chief instruments of this German world-empire scheme in Latin America was General Wilhelm von Faupel, of the Imperial German Army. He first went to Argentina as a youngish instructor of military science in the Argentine War College in 1912. Two years later he returned to Germany, served the Kaiser for the four years of the World War, and then returned to Buenos Aires as military counselor to the Inspector General of the Argentine Army. He remained with the Argentine Army until 1926, when he left to assume a similar post in Brazil. Later he served a three-year term as Inspector General of the Peruvian Army.

Faupel was an excellent drill master. He was also one of the most profound enemies of popular government our century has known. He taught the Argentine officers how to drill their troops, but he also drilled the officers themselves in the facts of life and politics as he saw them. He imported former Reichswehr officers to impart his creed to officers in Argentina and other Latin lands. And when he finally left Latin America, it was to become chief of the Ibero-American Institute of Nazi Berlin—the agency which organized and ran the Italo-German war against the Spanish Republic in 1936-39 and created the overseas Falangist movement as the key to fascist penetration in Latin America and the Philippines.

It was the ideology of Wilhelm von Faupel and his German aides which found its first expression in Argentina in the Uriburu coup of September, 1930. For with the Uriburu action, as Argentine Deputy Raul Damonte Taborda pointed out in his report of 1941, "Uriburu attempted to unite all the reactionary forces, give them a program and throw them into action against the democratic groups that had survived. He inaugurated the Argentine Civic

Legion, organized on the pattern of European fascist organizations. . . . The oligarchic caste that came to power had the intention of transplanting certain attitudes of Mussolini and Hitler. To get these powers, it tried to annul the rights and dignity of the citizens. Lacking a program that would permit it to attract the sympathy of the people, it appealed to the 'Jewish peril' and to the 'red peril' in order to disguise its real ends."

From the fascist standpoint, the only thing wrong with the Uriburu coup was the fact that it came a decade too early. It did succeed in giving the nation's most fascist elements a brief but sweet taste of absolute power, and it also gave the inherently fascist elements in the Army an idea of what remained to be done before fascism could be brought to Argentina.

Then, in April, 1931, there occurred an event which was to strengthen the democratic spirit throughout Latin America. The people of the Motherland, Spain, achieved a bloodless victory over the Monarchy and established their Republic. The triumph of the Spanish people forced the world reactionaries who eyed Latin America as their oyster to order a strategic retreat. As long as the Spanish Republic lived, the peoples of the Latin-American democracies had before them too perfect a symbol of their own power to prevent fascism in their own countries.

Uriburu had to compromise. Fascism as such was out of the question in 1930; Germany was still three years away from the day she could help the Uriburus, and Mussolini's bark was even then much stronger than his bite. But it soon became apparent that the reactionaries who flocked around Uriburu had made up their minds that such elections as those free-balloting affairs of 1916, 1922 and 1928 could not be allowed to continue. They won their point, and from that day on democracy as we know it was ended in Argentina.

Uriburu himself was sick of cancer and his henchmen kept working on him to go to Europe for an operation. His forces, like those of the Perón Junta today, began purging. They cleaned out the Radicals and the socialists they didn't like and even thought of replacing the democratic Constitution with one of authoritarian pattern. Uriburu's excuse for his actions was that some way had to be found to keep the Radicals from getting their hands into the cash

boxes once more. The election-fraud method, meaning that the "ins" counted the votes, became his solution.

Strangely enough, the first president to be picked by the Uriburu *politicos*, was General Agustin P. Justo. Justo had belonged to the Radical Party, but not to the Irigoyen elements against which Uriburu had revolted. Like Uriburu, he was supported by the anti—the anti-democratic reactionaries and anti-personalist groups. He was a strong man who was to keep order and yet in some ways he was pro-democratic. Later, at the end of 1942 and early in '43, he even emerged as the popular hope of Argentina's pro-democratic elements.

At the time of his presidency, neither Justo nor the people were so sure. When Justo's regime neared its close, he determined to pick his successor. It was a scrambled choice yet more liberal than the conservatives wanted. Dr. Roberto M. Ortiz was to be president and Ramon S. Castillo vice-president. Ortiz had always been a Radical too, yet he was more a middle-of-the-roader. Furthermore, Justo thought he could control him. Castillo, "the little professor from Catamarca," was counted on to attract the Conservatives. The team-up was, in a sense, like the Roosevelt-Garner ticket, although at the time it happened here, the differences between the two men were much clearer than they were when Cactus Jack and F.D.R. were teamed. So the elections were held, the ballots fixed and Ortiz moved in. The Conservatives didn't like it, but they hoped it would work out. They began to like it even less when Ortiz displayed a desire to swing the country toward lawful elections and democracy once more. As his efforts increased, his popularity with the people grew. But the Conservatives, the Nazi-inspired nationalists and the German-trained Army hierarchy didn't propose to let Ortiz get too far. The Conservatives already thought of him as a double-crosser and even before Ortiz, blinded by diabetes, gradually relaxed his hold on the presidential reins and let them slip out of his hands to Castillo, the rift was strong.

If Ortiz had lived, I believe Argentina would have joined the ranks of the other American Republics, severed relations with the Axis and done her share in battling the dictatorships. Whether the Conservatives and the Axis-influenced Army would have allowed it is another question.

In any case, Castillo, stiff, unbending, colorless, determined right from the start that as President he would run things the way he and his Conservative coalition wanted things run. Pearl Harbor inflamed Argentina as it did the rest of the hemisphere and the pro-democratic world. Every Argentine newspaper except the outright pro-Nazi rags demanded adherence to the Havana Conference pledges that an attack on one American nation was an attack on all. Adherence to the Havana pledges would have meant the end of isolation and maybe the end of the Castillo *status quo*. So Castillo came back with his answer. Nine days after the Jap attack on Pearl Harbor he imposed a state of seige for all the Argentine Republic. It meant Argentina's United States-patterned Constitution was suspended for the duration. It meant the end of freedom of the press and the radio. It meant no more public assembly without express permission. And furthermore the police came around to the newspaper offices with another little proviso: not only were the papers told not to comment on foreign relations, but they were warned against criticizing the state of siege. Castillo's reason was glib for such an ordinarily tight-lipped man. Order had to be maintained at all costs and, after all, weren't these difficult times?

It didn't take long to discover deeper meanings, however. In January, 1942, the Foreign Ministers of all the American Republics assembled in the freshly refurbished, air-conditioned Itamaraty Palace in Rio de Janeiro for their third consultative conference and the most severe test hemisphere diplomacy had faced since World War II had come to the Americas. The Republics of our hemisphere had previously, at Havana, pledged themselves to unity in principle—but this was the big proving ground. The ultimate aim was simple and direct: rupture of all ties, diplomatic and commercial, with the Axis; after that, war for those who wanted it. At the least, the conference was to find ways and means to deprive the Axis of any foothold it might have in the Americas. But while the rest of the Americas were willing, portly, prideful Enrique Ruiz Guinazu, Castillo's spokesman for prudent neutrality, balked and held back. It was a trying week. Finally a compromise was worked out, but it was a compromise weakened by Argentina's fence-sitting. The conference, instead of tossing a twenty-one-voiced cry of defiance and

scorn into the teeth of Berlin, Rome and Tokyo, agreed to "recommend" that each nation sever relations in its own due time.

The rest of the Americas soon followed through. All but Argentina, and Argentina's closest good neighbor Chile, had broken by year's end. But no sooner had Ruiz Guiñazú come back to the huzzahs of the Nazi press and the icy silence of the pro-democratic papers than Castillo began increasing the steps that were to sap the will of resistance from his people and prepare the way for the military clique that was even to push him to one side.

In March, 1942, the bi-annual elections for half the members of Argentina's House of Representatives—the Cámara de Diputados—were held. Castillo, by plastering the country with posters insisting that he "needed a majority in Congress in order to assure prosperity," made his neutrality policy the issue. In the provinces where he controlled the vote few were even interested in going to the polls, and his men sailed in with little trouble. But in Buenos Aires and the big interior city of Cordoba, where Castillo hadn't as yet succeeded in throttling the opposition, the Radicals rolled up an impressive score, and proved where the Argentine people stood. Numerically Castillo was able to muster only 20 percent of the ballots. But he had the last laugh anyway. He still held the Senate, and when Congress got rambunctious, he merely ordered it dissolved.

His muzzling and his undercover string-pulling gradually disorganized the never very solid mass of public sentiment. Keeping Argentina neutral also meant neutralizing the opposition, and helping the pro-neutrality, Nazi-aided, pro-Axis nationalists.

In brief, by the time the crucial year of 1943 began, Castillo had succeeded in imposing on Argentina precisely the sort of pseudo-representative government the German reactionaries, acting through Chancellor Bruening, had foisted on the prone body of the Weimar Republic. The Castillo regime represented Argentine reaction as it was strengthened between the premature Uriburu coup and the dawn of New Year's Day, 1943. Many things had happened to strengthen world fascism since September, 1930: the triumph of the Nazis in Berlin, the birth of the suicidal appeasement policies of the democracies, the shocking complicity of the democratic powers when Germany and Italy sent their armies to Spain to destroy the Republic, the triumphs of the Nazi Armies in Europe and the Japanese

at Pearl Harbor, Manila and British Asia—all these strengthened the hand of fascism in Argentina.

As I look over my diary in the days between January 1 and June 4, 1943—the day the Colonels brought full-dress fascism to Argentina—certain entries stand out like signposts along the road to totalitarianism. There was, for example, my entry of January 5th, when Argentina still had some men in Congress who opposed the regime.

JANUARY 5, 1943

Deputy Juan A. Solari, who heads the Congressional Committee probing Axis activities, caused quite a row today when he announced to the newsmen that an official Axis Joint Committee, in which a Falangist Spanish Embassy representative plays an important part, is directing and controlling totalitarian propaganda in South America from headquarters here in Buenos Aires. Solari said that his Committee was already working with the Inter-American Consultative Committee for the Political Defense of the Continent (This body, of which more later, was created after the Rio Conference and now meets regularly in Montevideo) which is supposed to be probing the Falange. Solari told us that José Ignacio Ramos, the Press Attaché of the elegant, tapestry-hung Madrid Embassy, is the official representative on this local board. Solari also said that Argentine Nationalist groups are working hand in glove with the Axis and that the Spanish Hispanidad front is being employed more and more to attack democracy and Pan-American ideals.

Went to see Solari to get more details. What he had to say confirms many a previous suspicion. The Falangists are being used more and more by Berlin to sell the Axis tune in Latin America. He indicated that when the Consejo de España, the official Falange body here, was dissolved by the late President Roberto M. Ortiz in May, 1939, Franco's Embassy staff just stepped in, took over all its activities but changed the names, and has been going full blast ever since. Solari said he knew the identity of many of those directing Falange activities here and that too many of them were in the Diplo-

matic Service. He didn't want to mention any names, even off the record. He did say, however, that Don Eduardo Aunós, who as Franco's boy-financial-wonder-wizard recently headed the propaganda-making Madrid super-powered Trade Mission here, had re-organized Falange activities in the midst of negotiating the multi-million-peso pact. It wasn't any secret, he said, that Spanish boats carrying Argentine meat, wheat and other products to Spain were bringing back tons of strongly totalitarian propaganda. This stuff, he said, is particularly dangerous because it gets across to Latin America through the guise of mutual Spanish-Latin American ties of language, religion and race.

It seems to many of us that neither the majority of people here or up in the States takes this Falange activity in Latin America half seriously enough.

Solari had to flee Argentina shortly after June 4th. When it was too late for his warnings to be fully effective, at least as far as Argentina is concerned, he was invited to Washington by our Government to tell his story. And at this writing, Washington is still appeasing Franco.

Eight days later, my diary records another important trend of the Castillo regime. Here its pre-fascist pattern becomes evident.

JANUARY 13th

The Argentine Asociación de Periodistas (Newspapermen's Association) has forwarded to the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Miguel Cuciatti, a petition requesting the lifting of the restrictions which govern dailies and magazines here. The ties binding Argentina's press—once among the finest and best in the world—have become stronger in the past few months. Suspensions of papers that overstep the Castillo line are on the increase. The State of Siege was imposed last December by Castillo, then acting for Ortiz, and the explanation given the people was that freedom of the press might affect the country's neutrality; therefore some restrictions were necessary. As it has worked out, however, the estado de sitio restrictions have

served to hinder all the pro-democracy papers, and at the same time permit the venom-fanged Axis rags like *Pampero* to carry on pretty much as they please.

Latest decree, for example, has been the police order forbidding any paper from even mentioning the anti-Axis findings of Solari's Congressional Committee. Foreign correspondents can file what they please—but they're likely to be jacked up and put on the spot if they send out anything which the Government doesn't like.

Within a week, there were two further entries which showed how the winds were blowing.

JANUARY 18th

Evidence seems to be accumulating that the Spanish Falange, the Italian pro-fascists and the Nazi organizations have, with the local anti-democratic groups, formed a militant National Unity Front, pledged to maintenance of Argentine neutrality at all costs. Their newspapers have adopted a more or less uniform slogan and are emphasizing nationalism—with slogans like "Argentina for the Argentines and no foreign interference." "Sovereignty" seems to be another favorite word.

Their entire platform follows the Axis line to the last detail. There are no colored shirts—yet—but all the other trappings of Nazi organizations are present.

Chiefly the United Front group seems to be screaming that communists, Jews and Yankees seek to get Argentina into the war by supporting a campaign to push out Castillo. Some of the nationalist papers are coming out frankly and saying that they hope to "persuade" Castillo to accept an extension of his term. Under Argentine law a President may not succeed himself, but the pretext is that Castillo was not elected. He moved into the office following Ortiz' illness. They are trying to find a way for him to continue his occupancy of the Casa Rosada, which means continuance of the present foreign policy.

A meeting was called by anti-Semitic, anti-democratic ex-Governor Manuel E. Fresco and his Union Nacional Argentina for all of Argentina's Nazi-stooging, nationalist groups. The United Front was certainly proven to be a fact. When Fresco announced that his gang was joining forces with retired, foul-mouthed General Juan Bautista Molina—who heads the Alianza de la Juventud Nacionalista—"to resist foreign imperialism," the cheers practically shook the building.

Of course it was all staged—but it was frightening just the same. Fresco, a passionate orator, although not as good as he thinks he is, pledged himself with frequent and steady cheer-led interruptions to "fight the communists and Marxists, the international bankers and the Jewish-American imperialists."

Molina was there in all his glory, but Fresco stole the show. Molina seems to enjoy some special kind of favor with the Government. Charges of treason were filed against him as the leader of an unsuccessful revolution planned for December, 1940, but they have never been pressed. The fact that he might try again never seems to worry Castillo. Or it may be that Molina's powerful friends in the Army have plans of their own.

On January 22nd, I noted in my journal that the Emergency Advisory Committee for the Political Defense of the Hemisphere in Montevideo was considering the release of another United States memorandum giving the details of Nazi espionage in Argentina. Here are my highlights:

- a) The persistent neutrality which Argentina likes to call her "stand," not only permits the Axis diplomatic missions to operate—which would not be so bad—but also allows widespread anti-Allied espionage and sabotage endangering the security of the hemisphere.
- b) At least ten American nations are directly threatened and much property of the American and United Nations endangered by this continued Axis activity.
- c) Axis agents include two members of the German Embassy staff who organized a system with a series of interlocking groups, so de-

vised that the elimination of any one man or one entire group would not affect the work of the master organization.

d) Besides Argentina, activities affected Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, the U.S.A., Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, plus the British island of Trinidad and the Dutch island of Aruba.

e) The German Embassy organized, directed and financed the espionage-sabotage program.

f) Diplomatic communications were widely used for the transmission of espionage data.

This certainly slapped back in the teeth of Argentine declarations that she was controlling telecommunications in accordance with the pledge taken at Rio.

This led to quite a scandal in Buenos Aires, but in the end, Castillo rode out the storm by further clamping down on the press and doing nothing about the Nazis.

Two days later, Chile broke with the Axis. Argentine *políticos* at first ascribed this move to Chile's hunger for Lend-Lease supplies. They were dead wrong. Chile broke with the Axis when the people of that neighboring democracy took to the streets in monster demonstrations demanding this move. This large-scale revolt from below, which forced the fence-straddling Chilean Government to reverse itself, threw terror into the hearts of Argentina's reactionaries. After that, things got tougher in Argentina, press restrictions became more numerous, and the country was a step closer to fascism.

Tension mounted that week. An entry in my diary at that time is probably typical of the notebooks of all correspondents who were in Buenos Aires then. To a man, we all began to examine the possible sources of a fascist coup. We dug up what we could on the political, military and clerical supporters of fascism.

JANUARY 28th

Have been trying to get together enough detail for a round-up on the situation within the Catholic Church here and elsewhere in Latin America. It is one of the most vital stories, if the true state

of affairs is to be understood, yet few papers—even the most liberal—dare touch it. They're afraid to handle anything that has to do with the Catholic Church.

My own summation is that the Church here and elsewhere in Latin America is being torn in two directions: there are small but powerful liberal forces—and a big and probably even stronger totalitarian majority.

Army men tell me that there are lots of shifts going on among the upper staff officers. General Ramírez, who took over the Ministry of War from Tonazzi last November 18th, hasn't of course given any reason for these new assignments. So far it's impossible to discover whether it's mere Army routine or if he's pushing men up because of their political stand.

Tonazzi was an old hand at this kind of shuffling. It was his upping of those Army men favoring Justo and the democracies that is supposed to have caused Castillo to toss him out. If we could only check up whether or not Ramírez is promoting pro-Axis officers to important posts, it would be a strong indication of what might lie ahead. However, nobody seems to know whether the German gang in the Army is getting the key spots.

Democratic Argentinian statesmen saw what was coming and did what they could to prevent it. Men like Juan Antonio Solari kept hammering home as hard as they could the idea that the real enemy was not Brazil or Lend-Lease, but the Axis. On February 5th, for example, he released to the foreign correspondents the full text of his report on totalitarian penetration into Argentina and the use of the German Tourist Bureau for propaganda and espionage. The report, which ran to 30,000 words, showed that the German State Railways Information Office had distributed propaganda from its creation in 1933 until its dissolution in May of 1942. What especially hit the Argentine Government in the report was a note that former Federal employees were continuing their propaganda, getting orders from Berlin and being financed by the German Embassy. Esteban Navarro, an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Guillermo Melchior, an inspector in the radio communications bureau of the Post Office, were both identified as being connected with the Nazi group, the latter being tagged as a salaried Nazi employee.

The reaction of the Castillo Government to this exposé was typical. Interior Minister Miguel Culaciatti informed foreign correspondents that henceforth all cable and radio messages must be presented in duplicate and accompanied by a translation. In other words, a policy of censoring foreign news cables was instituted.

It took the Castillo Government only another day to take the next logical step such governments take when the foreign press begins to hint that they are pro-fascist and anti-democratic.

"We anti-democratic? Nonsense. We can prove we are not!" My diary for February 6th tells how they proved it.

FEBRUARY 6th

The Government has apparently become miffed by all the agitation here and in the United States about its failure to take steps against anti-democratic activities. So, instead of moving against the Nazis, it has started to clean up the communists. Five communist leaders have been nabbed and jailed by Culaciatti's police. The labor delegation which called on him to protest was simply told that the Government has outlawed the Communist Party (which means any alleged Red can be seized, jailed without trial, habeas-corpus or protest) and does not propose to permit communist activities. Those who have been picked up include Victorio Codovilla, who has been sent down to La Pampa, 350 miles southwest of Buenos Aires, Rodolfo Ghioldi, once interned in Brazil and now to be sent some 300 miles northwest of Cordoba; Juan Alvarez, Juan Riel and Florindo Moretti. The idea appears to be to get them outside the federal capital of Buenos Aires, where the workers are unsettled, and keep them in some Siberia in the interior, where supposedly they can't do anything dangerous.

Culaciatti also sent wires to all the Governors in the Provinces, asking them to report on the measures they have taken since his message of December 20th., urging that all totalitarian activities—Nazi and fascist, as well as communist—be suppressed. I hear plenty of grumbling in the cafés, in clubs and elsewhere, that the Government isn't doing anything to bring the Nazi spies, indicted last

December, to trial. The courts have been on vacation, but they have promised that the cases would head the list when the Tribunales open.

It was the same shrill anti-communist line Franco used as his excuse for sending the Blue Legions to fight in Russia. As long as Franco got away with it, the Castillo gang felt that this most decrepit of political gags still had plenty of virility. Therefore, when we began to hear rumors from Montevideo toward the middle of the month that the Political Defense Committee was going to probe Spanish Falange activities in Latin America, more than one member of the foreign-press colony in Buenos Aires expected that Argentina would have to begin to trim her fascist sails.

"Notes have been sent to all Latin American Republics asking them to co-operate," I wrote in my diary on February 15th, the day we got the word from Uruguay. "Argentina, keeping in mind its recent pact with Spain, has reportedly bounced back a sharp reply which the Committee has already answered . . . I learn that the Committee's action was taken as a result of finding new evidence of the close ties between the Nazi-fascists and the Falange in Latin-America, especially in Mexico. It's about time that some widespread probe of the espionage being carried on by Madrid on behalf of Berlin and Rome is made. If the Committee's inquiry isn't side-tracked by the State Department appeasers, it may put Spanish fascist blow-hot-blow-cold sympathies on the spot. Best evidence possible of success in the Falange probe is the bitterness with which Nazi-fascist and Falangist publications are already attacking the new move."

But nothing happened. The Committee was side-tracked. Falangist activities were increased.

They say that you cannot judge a government without studying its leading personalities. I am not certain that I believe in this theory any longer, but I dutifully made notes on the key men of the Castillo regime. I include excerpts describing some of these men only because certain of their number, particularly Patrón Costas, have their personal apologists in the States who claim that they could have brought Argentina into the United Nations if given a free hand.

It looks as if a deal is set to move Robustiano Patrón Costas, El Negrero (the slave-driver)—a fascist if I have ever seen one—into the Presidency to succeed Castillo. Patrón Costas' name has been mentioned for quite a while, but yesterday is the first time Castillo has publicly indicated the Senate President as his choice.

Not many people have any doubt that if the elections go through, Castillo's man is going to sail in. The only district where elections are fairly honest is in the federal capital of Buenos Aires. Starting with Tucumán, Castillo's gang is making sure of things outside, to make up for this.

Another factor that will help Castillo is that the liberal forces are still scrapping among themselves and can't get together to form a Popular Front. This is one of Argentina's great weaknesses. The socialists, who are strongest in Buenos Aires, are now suggesting that all liberal groups should forget differences and back somebody because he is a really big man. "Stop scrapping around or trying to back someone with the right party membership," they said. The Radicals—who have the majority (but also lack leadership) answered that would be fine, provided they made the choice of man. If the pro-democratic forces can really get together, it might even be that Patrón Costas would get a good battle. However, no one really believes that the official entry—meaning Patrón Costas—isn't going to have a walk-over.

I think Argentina's Socialist Party is probably the most truly pro-democratic group in the country—but they're still a minority force. The party has a brief history, but a brilliant one. Its grand old man today—and my favorite Argentine politico—is Dr. Alfredo L. Palacios, whose big curling mustachios in the old Italian tradition are the cartoonists' delight. Palacios has probably sponsored more laws than any other legislator in Argentine history. He was the first socialist in this hemisphere to win a national seat in the Congress of American Republics, back in 1904. In his long political career—he only admits to being sixty-two—he has fought duels, served as President of the big, liberal La Plata University, carried on a lively correspondence with Franklin D. Roosevelt, and eloquently orated his way through all sorts of battles. His failing lies on the side of

organization and planning. Such things in the Socialist Party are left to Dr. Nicolas Repetto, who at seventy-two is socialist leader, organizer and brain trust. Repetto ran for the Presidency in 1938 against Ortiz, but lost. Most of Repetto's political career has been as a deputy, and he's stood head and shoulders above most of the political stooges in Congress here.

The socialists, constantly strong on denouncing Argentina's many political scandals, have always maintained a scandal-free tradition themselves, which is remarkable here.

Always strong for inter-American solidarity, the socialists have also favored rupture of Axis diplomatic relations, suppression of Axis activities and defense of Parliamentary prerogatives. They've also battled for freedom of speech and assembly. Their chief strength comes from the heavy, intelligent labor vote in Buenos Aires. Socialist leaders include, Dr. Mario Bravo (they call him the golden-tongued; he was formerly a Senator and is now a Deputy), and something really rare in Latin politics: a Russian-born deputy, Enrique Dickmann. Both are among the most brilliant of Argentine intellects. These men are not only good legislators, but powerful writers, Argentina Libre and Vanguardia, the socialist papers, contain some of the best topical writing on the continent. The socialist weakness, however, lies in addiction to theory and philosophy and what we might call their lack of practical, sound common sense. In an essentially agricultural country, they've concentrated on Buenos Aires and the cities, overlooking the importance of going after the rural sections of the population.

FEBRUARY 18th

Some of the boys seem to think Patrón Costas is all right and that he's going to string along with us. But I'm not so sure. He is an arch-conservative sugar estanciero and industrial czar. Even more significant so far is that in his selection there's been no talk of policies or platforms, no discussions or even pretense of following the democratic forms, even though the Argentine Constitution, patterned on that of the United States, guarantees the same freedoms as those enjoyed in the United States.

The censors held up all outgoing stories regarding Patrón Costas for some time, but finally cleared any of those that weren't too critical. Many people think that although Patrón Costas might, for business motives alone, want to join with the United Nations, he is more to be feared than Castillo. He is far more active, far stronger and more desirous of personal power than the old professor. Up in his native province of Salta he runs things with an iron hand. Nazi organizations have long flourished there. Many of the Graf Spee sailors permitted to escape internment are holding out in Salta. Some people say that Patrón Costas is pro-British, but I have searched his record carefully and I cannot find the slightest affinity toward the United Nations war aims. He was one of the Uriburu-Justo crowd who made the 1930 revolution to oust Irigoyen. If Patrón Costas employed Nazi methods (before the rise of the Nazis) in his own province, he felt his end justified the means.

To prevent fascism, you need anti-fascists. This should be axiomatic. To appeal to anti-fascists in Argentina to prevent fascism in their own country, you must appear with clean hands yourself. This should also be plain. But there is one man (at least) in our State Department who does not see things this way. On March 4th and 5th, I had the unpleasant duty of recording the following notes.

MARCH 4th

No wonder Latin-Americans and Argentina in particular get mixed up about Washington's foreign policies. United States Ambassador Carlton Hayes' disclosure at Barcelona that Franco Spain is now receiving large amounts of North American petroleum, and other vital supplies, has caused a storm of comment and controversy. The only people who favor it are pro-Axis, pro-totalitarians, who are being whipped into huzzahs of approval by Spanish Falangists. The pro-democratic newspapers and organizations just can't make out what it's all about and why Washington keeps appeasing Franco that way. The Confederation of Workers of Chile has issued

a call from Santiago for the suspension of export of all strategic materials to Spain. They're not pulling any punches in saying that the nitrates, copper, sugar, etc., shipped to Spain from Chile, are being supplied to the Axis war machine. Latin America, which in the past few months has been subjected to an increasingly powerful barrage of Nazi-inspired, pro-Franco propaganda, has, in the main, a far stronger distrust of Spain than the United States. This doesn't extend to officialdom and to the upper-class or clergy-inspired people, especially those here, in Chile and Peru. That class has gone hook, line and sinker for Madrid's Pan-American-hating Hispanidad. Such groups as the Legionarios Civiles de Franco (Franco's Civil Legions), which swear first allegiance to the Spanish Caudillo and the Casa de España, through their official papers like the *Diario Español* here, have gone into parades of praise of the Hayes' speech. *El Diario Español* spreads the story over the front page as proof of "the United States belief in the Franco cause," and adds: "Here at last is evidence which cannot be doubted." Incidentally, *El Diario* gets practically all its news from the Nazi T.O. service.

Leading Spanish Republicans here, including many who have seen at first hand what fascism means in Spain, can't dope out Washington's line. The pro-democratic press is scratching its head and wondering. Castillo's followers, jumping at the perfect set-up afforded them, are all saying that Hayes' speech proves that neither the United States nor Britain really means any of the occasional finger-wagging at the neutrals. And they're drawing the inference that if the United States is going to aid Spain, then certainly assistance for Argentina must be taken for granted. Even our own diplomatic crowd are confused and their resentment—while off the record—is hard to hide. A round-up of my liberal sources—and they were outspoken—shows that they feel that Spain is neutral only by permission from Berlin. And they argue that no assistance should be given to Franco unless Madrid stops its anti-democratic propaganda down here and also releases the thousands of anti-fascist Spaniards still held in concentration camps.

Today, more than a year after Carlton Hayes' statement, I can see even more clearly how it strengthened the hands of the fascists and brought disillusion and disunity to the anti-fascist ranks in

Argentina. Castillo's supporters said, and with much justification, that after all Argentina was doing less for the Axis than was Franco Spain, and that if Washington could stomach and support Franco, the *yanquis* would just have to take the milder Franco of the Casa Rosada. Castillo's opponents were demoralized, and more than one borderline democrat who looked to Washington for the ultimate answer to fascism in Argentina just about gave up hope for any outside moral support.

Early in April, I made two entries in my journal within the space of six days.

APRIL 1st

Clarinada, which is the local version of Streicher's Der Stürmer, issued its April number today. It's a screaming, hate-dripping, red-cover affair which sells for a United States nickel, claims a tremendous circulation in Argentina and the rest of South America and is remarkable—I think—not so much for what it says, as for the fact that official agencies of the Government are paying for it. The only advertisements are official ones. Even firms willing to risk a customer boycott by displaying their wares in other Nazi-inspired sheets have steered clear of the pages of Clarinada. For a long time Clarinada's chief advertiser was the state oil monopoly, Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales, which has never liked yanqui firms and once helped produce an anti-United States film, Petroleo. Y.P.F.'s boss is Don Ricardo Silveyra, whose brother, Dr. Carlos M. Silveyra, runs Clarinada. When pro-democratic organizations protested last year, the ads were pulled out, but the last few editions have had them back in again, together with the Banco Municipal (Municipal Bank), the Caja Nacional de Ahorro Postal (National Postal Savings Fund) and other agencies. Silveyra is apparently unworried. The latest issue continues to dish out the regular diet of attacks on "international Jews" and "British-yankee-communist capitalists," which is quite a combination. It openly tosses a few bouquets at Der Stürmer, terming it a "marvelous periodical . . . which unmasks the Jews throughout the world . . . and exhibits them in their

nauseating nakedness." Clarinada's description of Manhattan is also a classic; it reads: "Capital of the anti-Christ, New York is the center for the evil manipulations of Judaism which originated the fifth column." Furthermore, and this ought to interest Walter Winchell and Leonard Lyons, "It is the only city in the world where cocaine, heroin and opium are sold in envelopes stuck between the Talmud and inhaled in ecstasies by pious Jews, by Negroes, by Christians who become brutes and by Chinese."

APRIL 7th

The clamp-down on Argentine newspapers gets stronger and stronger. Another delegation made up of the *Circulo de la Prensa*, the Argentine Federation of Journalists and the Buenos Aires Journalist's Association, visited the Interior Minister Culaciatti yesterday and pleaded with him to annul the ban on *Argentina Libre*, one of the best pro-democratic weeklies. They also asked Culaciatti to study the general situation caused by the repeated suspensions of papers and magazines. Culaciatti didn't seem to care very much. He gave them the usual promise about "looking into things" and then tossed a crumb of hope by announcing that Dr. Julio Esnabar Notta, sub-director of *La Hora*, had been sprung from the Villa Devoto jail, where he had been held for five days. Newsmen who have recently arrived here say the present Argentine restrictions are the toughest of any hemisphere republic, including Brazil, where Vargas is loosening up more. So far as freedom of speech regarding non-military matters is concerned, it certainly beats anything outside of Germany and Italy.

The wraps on the U. P. and A. P. are also getting tighter. During the last week both bureaus were warned against carrying statements of any Government functionary—regardless of rank—without permission from the Presidential Palace. We hear this is the result of anti-Axis interviews given by certain Argentine Deputies visiting in New York. Time Magazine has been having a greater headache than anyone else. The "Air Express Edition," which is shipped down in bulk and then sent through the mail to thousands

of subscribers, both North American and English-reading Argentines, has been stopped so many times that they say correspondent Hal Horan has reserved seats at the Casa Rosada for protesting. Apparently anything Time prints about Argentina is taboo here, since, like most of the rest of us, they haven't many bouquets to toss at Castillo. I suspect Time is now scissoring some offending stories itself, in order to get by the local censor and delivered. Radio stations have been forbidden to give any news whatsoever in connection with the communists, measures taken by the police of other Government authorities against the party, or against labor unions in general; nor may they mention appeals made by third parties on behalf of arrested persons.

Toward the end of April, 1943, I went out to the ranch of an affable reactionary Argentine cattle raiser to get a line on what was going through the minds of the class which gave Castillo his firmest support. Meat is the key to Argentine's economics, meat that the *estancieros*, who must export or die, cannot send to the United States thanks to a tariff wall and an even more formidable barrier of official United States regulations.

APRIL 26th (*Don Roberto's Estancia*)

Although Don Roberto is not exactly a typical estanciero, I've yet to meet one who is really worried over the meat question, or the future of Argentina's export trade. They can quote chapter and verse about world meat or cattle production. Even those who would like to see a break with the Axis for ideological reasons argue that as things go in the world today, Britain can't do without Argentine meat, hides, wool, etc. Some Britishers who know openly admit that argument is correct. Otherwise, they say, would London have stood so much funny business from the Argentine Government? To any suggestion that sterner measures should be taken with the Argentine Government, they answer: "We must avoid provoking reprisals—we must have that meat to feed our troops." The estancieros realize this only too well. If you tell an estanciero that

through not joining the United Nations, Argentina is spoiling her chances of future trade, he replies: "They'll have to fill their needs, and no other country in the world can produce meat as good and as cheap as ours."

The *estancieros*, Castillo's most consistent supporters, were not men to be moved by fears of fascism. When they thought of fascism, they thought of Franco Spain, and there the Falange had created a state which the large landowners could look upon with envy. After all, the fascist state in Spain, which had slashed the budgets for education and all social services, annulled the laws guaranteeing minimum wages for agricultural workers and put an end to the Spanish Republic's program of land reform (that is, the breaking up of large estates and selling them to the landless peasants), was a state which held no terrors for this class.

Argentina had to look to the landless middle classes and to the working class for men and women who would oppose the march of fascism.

APRIL 28th

It may be that a democratic union of the liberal forces will be formed after all. The Chamber of Deputies has been holding its preliminary meetings, and yesterday afternoon the liberal groups reached an agreement for joint political action against the strongly organized conservative faction.

The fact that the Socialist and Radical parties submitted joint projects at today's preliminary session is important, for it indicates that possibly the two will really get together to contest the Presidential elections next September. Leaders of the Radical Party seem—during the Holy Week just ended—to have moved away a little from their determination to co-operate only if they remain bosses. They appear to have relaxed over the week-end. The committee which the Party named to study the prospects of a democratic union is now said to have decided to recommend that the Radicals make concessions to other liberal factions and choose candidates for the Presidential campaign. They may even go so far as to urge that the Presidential candidate need not be from their own group.

APRIL 29th

The Radicals, after an all-night debate, have approved the democratic-union idea in principle. Another special committee is to report in three days on its practical possibilities. Pending this report, the party convention has postponed selection of its standard bearer. The Socialists have issued a statement congratulating their colleagues on the decision and offering to enter into immediate negotiations to pick Presidential candidates by common agreement.

Almost as if in answer to the growing threat of anti-fascist unity, the fascists took to the streets of Buenos Aires on May 1st.

MAY 1st

For three hours this afternoon I stood on the sidewalk on Calle Santa Fé, a wide avenida like the Rue de Rivoli in Paris, that runs through the barrio norte (northern district). Down Santa Fé marched 10,000 anti-United States, anti-democracy, pro-Nazi nationalists. They swaggered from Calle Pueyrredón down to Plaza San Martín, frantically shouting: "Death to the British pigs!" "Death to the Jews!" "Neutrality and Castillo!"

There were plenty of handbills thrown about, and many copies of the anti-Semitic Clarinada and Pampero were sold along the line. In contrast to the Nationalist meeting, the Socialist demonstration was mainly a series of speeches repudiating totalitarian principles, but in mild terms. The Labor demonstration in Luna Park was principally another ratification of solidarity with the United Nations.

MAY 3rd

The Radicals, the Socialists and the Progressive Democrats have agreed to join forces for a democratic union to oppose Patrón Costas. They seem to be pretty well agreed on a platform, but the most important factor is still undecided: who is going to be the can-

didate? The Radicals are supposed to name the Presidential nominee, and the Socialists and Progressive Democrats—the latter a new group—are to name the Vice-President. They have jointly worked out a sixteen-point platform, solidly democratic internationally and domestically, with some trends toward nationalism on economic and social-security matters. The platform defines the purpose of the union thus: "To defend Argentina's republican, democratic form of government; to guarantee Argentine liberties, and to support the principles of international solidarity and justice." It demands "active solidarity with those defying the Nazi-Fascist aggression must be the keystone of Argentine foreign policy." It proposes economic aid for the world democracies and looks forward to "post-war recognition of the sovereignty and autonomy of the peoples deprived of these rights by force."

This was not too little. It was too late. The elections were scheduled for September. And one month to the day after the anti-fascist parties of Argentina finally came to an agreement on a common program of action, the Perón Junta had made the jump into total fascism.

The last month of the Castillo era was much like any other month of the year. It began with a fascist scandal; it ended, however, with a fascist putsch. And in the scandal with which the month began on May 4th one could see Argentina was so close to actual fascism as to make even limited political freedom a luxury that the Government would soon discard.

Here are six entries from my diary in that last month of soft fascism in Argentina. I present them without comment for the story they tell in themselves.

MAY 4th

The newspaper Accion Argentina, which has no connection with the pro-democratic organization of the same name, came out with a sensational story today, charging that several members of the crew of the scuttled Nazi pocket battleship Graf Spee had escaped from

Argentina after being smuggled aboard a Spanish school ship, Sebastian Elcano, during its recent stop-over here.

The paper said that the men, all of whom were supposed to have been under internment in the interior since the famed South Atlantic defeat more than three years ago, had received assistance from Falangist officers and had been able to reach and board the ship without difficulty. Presumably they will return to Germany after the vessel arrives in Spain. Strangely enough, the story didn't cause much attention here, although I filed it rather heavily. The Graf Spee escapes have been so numerous that apparently nobody considers these revelations important any more. Captain Dietrich Niebuhr, who was the Nazi Naval Attaché here until he was finally tossed out back in January, arranged the whole escape system, established the underground railway which got them out on Spanish boats and advised the Nazi Embassy on ways and means of dealing with anybody who inquired into his business. Nobody knows exactly how many Spees have escaped, but practically all the 150 officers made their getaway in the first year after the scuttling incident. Captain Jurgen Wattenberg even had the nerve, last June, to broadcast over the German radio his description of the sinking of the Brazilian ship Parahyba.

Congressman Raul Damonte Taborda's report last July stated that six captains, twenty-one lieutenants, three second lieutenants, five electrical engineers, three radio operators, and twenty-six mechanics had got away. Most of them, it is assumed now, went into service on other German vessels or submarines. Niebuhr arranged the phony passports for many of these, and a good number of them got jobs on Spanish ships. Thus they had an alibi when the vessels were searched by the British authorities, who grant the needed safe-conduct navicerts to the Spanish vessels. Some of my good sources have told me that when the first escapes occurred some time back, Sir Esmond Ovey, then British Ambassador, called on Foreign Minister Ruiz Guinazú at the Chancellory to talk the matter over. Guinazú worked himself into a beautiful state of righteous indignation, asserting that the Ambassador's "interference" in the matter was an unwarranted violation of the famous Argentine sovereignty. Sir Esmond had to point out that the function of an Ambassador is talking over, in the most friendly way possible, any

points of friction that might arise between two countries. Ruiz Guinazu's attitude made any such friendly talks quite impossible and the presence of Ambassadors in the capital merely ornamental.

MAY 15th

Franco's propagandists, who seem more and more to derive their inspiration from Doc Goebbels in Berlin, are trying to match Hollywood's glamour appeal to Latin Americans by using their own brand of footlight and film bewitchment. The Franco line is to sell Hispanidad in direct opposition to Pan-American solidarity and an ever-growing number of Argentine and other Latin American theaters seem to be carrying the burden. I have checked at least ten theaters here running or planning Spanish dramatic works, reviews and comedies. The number of Franco's propaganda films, like *Raza* (which was a Latin-slanted exposition of Hitler's Aryan theory) and *Sin Novedad en el Alcázar* (the Falangist side of the siege of the famous fortress) is increasing. They haven't even attempted to hide their Berlin birth and blessing, and are shown principally in officially blacklisted theaters like the San Martín here and the Comedia in Santiago, Chile, which customarily run only Nazi swastika-spielers. To secure screen space, these Franco film representatives keep holding out the lure of big profits from Argentine-made films in hitherto closed-door Spain.

MAY 16th

War Minister Ramírez is supposed to have just called Ruiz Guinazu and asked, in the Army's name, for an urgent meeting with him and Navy Minister Mario Fincatti. According to the story, Ramírez had received information that President Higinio Moríñigo of Paraguay had abandoned his country's seventy-year-old policy of equilibrium between Argentina and Brazil by signing a friendship and military pact with Vargas during his visit to Rio.

This information was later formally denied in a statement by Brazil's Foreign Minister Aranha. Nevertheless, Ramírez asked Castillo to do something about the policy which might put their country into a more and more difficult spot because of lack of Lend-Lease and other arms. Ramírez is also supposed to have said that the Army was getting more and more disgusted with the way some Cabinet Ministers—especially Agriculture's Amadeo y Videla and Interior's Culaciatti—were grafting personally. Ruiz Guñazú promised to use his influence with Castillo, but apparently has not done much about it. Some of the top Army officers are supposed to be conferring regularly with Ramírez, but nothing can be proven about what they may be hatching.

MAY 23rd

The vicious, venom-spreading, anti-Semitic Clarinada came out with its June number today. All the Government ads are back. There's a full-page, two-color spread for Y.P.F., the Government oil monopoly, and ads from the National Savings Bank, the National Mortgage Bank, the Bank of the Province of Buenos Aires and the Municipal Bank. This Castillo paid-for version of Der Stürmer gets more and more bitter with each number and now calls on the Army to drive out the "Jewish-English-yanqui-communists-capitalists."

MAY 24th

There have been some interesting arrests of go-betweens in what appears to be a Spanish Falangist-German Nazi hemisphere spy ring, operating through Buenos Aires. The police haven't given out much information, but what they have said indicates that Berlin has been using Madrid agents more and more during the past two years, particularly since German spies have been exposed by the Continental Political Defense Committee in Montevideo and by

Argentina's own Administration-opposed Congressional Committee. Rosendo Almozara Lombera, twenty-three, member of the crew of a Spanish liner Cabo de Hornos, was seized on May 11th, the police revealed today. He was attempting to smuggle out of the port zone a car, with some 18,200 Argentine pesos and 5,660 United States dollars. He also had several documents written in secret code, dealing with Argentine-United States relations and with agents of the ring, for which he was apparently a trans-Atlantic contact.

MAY 25th

Something is stirring within the Administration. Apparently the Minister of War, little General Pedro Pablo Ramírez (whom Castillo appointed to succeed General Juan M. Tonazzi after the latter supposedly became too insistent in his demands that Argentina do something to get more armaments) went to Castillo and told him that he would prefer to resign rather than take his seat at the official 25th of May banquet alongside colleagues in the Cabinet who were "notorious thieves and robbers." He is said to have presented Castillo with a list of negocios sucios (dirty deals) in which not only Amadeo y Videla and Culaciatti are dabbling, but which Senora Castillo and her sons also sponsor and profit by. Castillo promised to make a note of it, as usual, but merely twiddled his watch and did nothing. His wife's ascendancy over him is supposed to be very strong. Apparently Ramírez takes his role of Minister of War very seriously. Should he decide to force Castillo to take action, it is generally believed that he would have the support of the top figures in the Army, who would be glad to use the graft scandals as a shield for their fascist aspirations. The way "Crown Prince" Patrón Costas and his bunch have rigged up the increase in the price of sugar is getting under the skin of the people, and financial leaders as well. It wouldn't be at all surprising if sugar proved to be the "banana peel" that will bring the old Castillo edifice toppling down the precipice. General Ramírez is supposed to have told Castillo that the sugar business has not gone down too well with the Army.

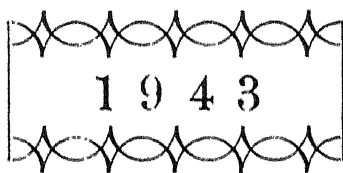
Castillo, having prepared the groundwork for the coming of fascism in Argentina, was ready to be put on the skids. The colonels who were to take his place had no objection to his policies; it was merely his methods which offended them.

The national elections were scheduled for September. And on May 3rd the democratic parties had forged a unified program for that election. There was no doubt in the minds of the colonels or anyone else that Castillo would not have received a majority of the votes cast by the Argentine people in that election.

To be sure, there had been no free and honest elections in Argentina since the Uriburu coup of 1930. But elections meant three months of campaigning, of arguing issues in public day after day. The colonels, and the Argentine reactionaries they served, had always been acutely conscious of what happened in Spain. They followed the now-traditional fascist pattern. In April, 1931, Alfonso Bourbon controlled the polls in Spain as rigidly as did Castillo and his henchmen in Argentina. Nevertheless, the vote against the Monarchy was so overwhelming that Alfonso fled Spain to, as he said, "avoid bloodshed," and everyone knew that he meant his own blood.

Now the men who controlled Argentina remembered that historic Spanish election, and they were determined to avoid a similar demonstration of anti-fascist strength in their own country. They resorted to the device of the putsch by bringing the Perón Junta into power, in order to liquidate the ballot-box and destroy all of Argentina's remaining democratic processes.

ARGENTINE DIARY



JUNE 4th (*Der Tag*)

While waiting to get through on tonight's long-distance call, I want to record my impressions of this day, which has been quite the busiest since I arrived in the Argentine—and that doesn't exclude my wedding to-do. Perhaps in a South American Republic—according to popular United States opinion—revolutions should be quite expected occurrences to be taken with a cup of coffee on a fine sunny morning. But I had really never expected to be in on one in very cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, although I had predicted a revolt even last November. I still don't know how much of my today's cable story got out; but while it is still fresh in my mind I want to put down the events more or less in the order in which they happened.

The Castillo Government has been overthrown by Army revolutionary forces, but the big question remains: does the new Military Junta (or board) represent a pro-democratic shift? Early this afternoon everybody was willing to believe so. But I'm suspicious about military juntas—this one in particular—and started having my doubts early. In talking to New York via long-distance I intend to stress that if nothing else. That this is a break for our side is not certain, and I think anything else is just wishful thinking. But now for the day's doings. This from my cable:

LED BY HITHERTO PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN GENERAL ARTURO RAWSON
—A DESCENDANT OF ONE OF THE FEW NORTEAMERICANOS TO GAIN A

PLACE IN ARGENTINE HISTORY—LESS THAN 10,000 TROOPS WERE RALLIED FROM THE GARRISON IN THE ARMY BASE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BUENOS AIRES, AND THEN MARCHED INTO TOWN, INTO THE CASA ROSADA, OR GOVERNMENT HOUSE, AND GRABBED CONTROL OF ARGENTINA. THE CENTRAL POLICE BARRACKS, THE BANCO DE LA NACION AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES WERE OCCUPIED WITH COMPARATIVELY LITTLE TROUBLE.

THE ONLY SHOOTING—AND I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF FOR MISSING IT—OCCURRED NEAR THE ESCUELA DE MECANICA DE LA ARMADA (NAVAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL) CLOSE TO THE BROAD, LANDSCAPED EXPRESS HIGHWAY AROUND THE CITY. EVEN THAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOMETHING OF A MISTAKE, BUT DETAILS AREN'T EASY TO GET TONIGHT. (Talked to New York at this point.)

Castillo, together with a number of his Ministers, apparently left the capital early today on the minesweeper *Drummond*. From somewhere out on the choppy Rio de la Plata he sent a wireless to Dr. Nicolas Repetto, President of the Supreme Court, saying the seat of Government had been established on the boat and that "worthy and condign punishment would be meted out to the leaders of the 'rebellion'." I couldn't say so directly tonight, but I told New York "that the gentleman who had gone fishing was on the lookout for a few more boats," and I think they got the point; i.e., that Castillo hopes to be able to rally the Navy, which, according to some reports, has been steaming up from its bases at Puerto Belgrano and Rio Santiago. To judge from all accounts, there seems to have been some wavering on Castillo's part, as the *Drummond* has been changing its course several times. First it was reported making for one of the naval bases, then putting out for the Uruguayan coast. None of this could be mentioned over the phone.

But before I forget it might be best to go back to the beginning and set events out in a more or less chronological order. It was around seven this morning when I learned that a revolt was in progress and that troops were on the march from the Campo de Mayo Barracks about twenty miles from town. It's almost traditional for revolutions to start from Mayo, where the majority of conscripts and the principal regiments are garrisoned. Despite the fuss that had been going on in the last few days over Ramirez, he didn't appear to figure in the movement at first. The only name we knew

was that of Rawson. The one reference to Rawson in my file was that he had successfully opposed retired General Juan B. Molina, the Nationalist would-be Fuehrer, for the Presidency of the officers club, The Circulo Militar. The immediate conclusion was that Rawson was pro-democratic. At least the fact that he had opposed Molina was considered a good sign.

In any case, my first idea was to drive out to meet the cavalry regiments, under Rawson's command, and see how they were making out. Round at the U.P. office the boys were still in a dither with precisely the same idea. We knew that the troops were on the march on the roads leading in from Campo de Mayo. Rawson and a Colonel Anaya were among others reported leading them. Nobody knew what forces, if any, might be loyal to Castillo and start shooting back. That's what we were all looking for, but we didn't want to be in the way of the stray shots.

I confirmed the fact that Castillo had refused to resign the night before and that he had issued a *manifesto* ordering General Rodolfo Marquez to take command of the "forces of repression." That announcement coming over the radio was the first intimation most people around Buenos Aires had of the general trend, although those living in the suburbs near the camp or with relatives in Government offices had directly seen, or heard, that something was stirring. Excitement and conjecture were spreading. Up till ten in the morning, however, communications with the exterior were still open and the wire services were filing flashes and other copy. Passing Plaza de Mayo, which faces the Casa Rosada on the way out toward the city limits, I saw the gardeners trimming the flower beds. The pigeons were getting their handouts in the warm fall sun and outwardly all was normal. We stopped at the Auto Club's service station on the adjoining Avenida Leandro Alem. There we heard from one of the near-by coast guards at the entrance to the port that some half dozen official cars with the scrambling Ministers had passed early in the morning on their way to the port zone. Immediately thereafter the drawbridge had been raised so that they couldn't be followed. No one got a single picture. By this time the main body of troops had reached the Navy's Mechanical Training School. Through some misunderstanding which isn't yet clear, the officer in command, not being in on the movement, had ordered the place defended. The

shooting only lasted forty minutes, the Campo Mayo men having to wait while their artillery was brought up. There must have been quite a to-do, to judge by the holes in all the near-by buildings which we saw. The new ultra-modern glass-bricked Gillette razor-blade plant certainly took a beating. Some civilians were supposed to have gotten in the way when the *colectivo* bus in which they were riding went by, but it's impossible to check on how many were actually hurt.

This was the only scrap, however, and, before noon, the patioced, block-square police-department headquarters had been taken over with most of the other Government buildings. There was quite an incident in regard to police headquarters; General Domingo Martinez, who was in charge, refused to hand over to his successor until protocol had been satisfied and he could surrender to an officer of equal rank and not to a subordinate who had first demanded his office.

By midday the origin and the trend of the revolution were still uncertain. Thousands of copies of a leaflet had been distributed among the troops and in many of the working-class districts. This leaflet, which had no signature, and whose authorship is still uncertain, was pro-democratic in tone and made specific mention of Argentine compliance with Pan-American pacts. This was generally assumed to indicate that the movement is directed against Castillo's neutrality policy, but up to now hasn't been confirmed. While the troops were pretty well in control by one o'clock there was still plenty of unfinished business which caused no end of confusion. For example, at five minutes after one o'clock, one radio station told me they had received the order to broadcast (with the State radio) an official communiqué from Castillo stating Ramírez had organized a subversive movement and that Castillo intended to do everything in his power to prevent the military forces from gaining the upper hand. A few minutes later, however, a delegation, representing the revolutionary Junta, arrived at the station and demanded that no more Castillo Government bulletins should be carried from the still-unoccupied Radio del Estado. At about the same time *Noticias Graficas* came out with the first afternoon paper of the day, announcing that the revolution had been successful and giving some details on the events. The midday crowds, apparently skipping

lunch, started gathering in the Plaza de Mayo, some shouting, "*Viva la Democracia!*", but most of them waiting to see what was going to happen. The cops allowed the people to gather, then dispersed the whole mob. By about three o'clock all the radio stations had apparently been taken over and were broadcasting bulletins signed by General Rawson, as Commandant of the revolutionary forces, telling the people to keep calm. Rawson's first proclamation read:

THE POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC may feel confident in the certainty that the movement initiated and carried through by the Army, is purely Argentine and only seeks the welfare and security of our people, being entirely devoid of political inspiration. For that reason, the people must keep order and tranquility, confident that the new authorities will know how to conduct the affairs of the Nation. VIVA LA PATRIA!

Further communiqués reported that specific Army officers had been entrusted with the Communications Departments and that Colonel Juan Perón had been appointed Chief of Staff of the Army.

As the crowds gathered in Plaza de Mayo, their chief source of amusement came from that old fascist, Dr. Manuel A. Fresco, who had barricaded himself with some employees in the ancient three-story building occupied by his newspaper *El Cabildo*, opposite the Casa Rosada. Fresco evidently wanted to capitalize on the movement and give the impression that he was one of its prime movers. So he began making speeches. He finally gave up his six-hour siege when the military decided he was offering too much competition and directed a few cannon and anti-tank guns at his balcony. By three-thirty the crowd in the plaza had increased to overflowing. They were still being pushed first one way and then the other by tear-gas squadrons. It seemed to me the public was not sure just what was going on, but was out for excitement. The muscle-boys started overturning street cars and smashing windows. When a gas leak developed in one of the big buses, somebody thought that a fire would help complete the picture. Pretty soon it was roaring away and the fire sirens were wailing; it was the highspot of the day. If troops hadn't come out from behind their barricades and shifted public attention to the balcony scene that was about to come, the intensely hated Buenos Aires Transport Corporation, already suffering from

war shortages, would have experienced an even greater reduction in its rolling stock.

The official Government radio station continued broadcasting a series of waltzes. The crowd in the plaza spread the word that the tune most frequently played was "Over the Waves," apparently in *homenaje* to Castillo and his Cabinet aboard the *Drummond*. Stories were going around that Castillo was on his way to Rio Santiago. Radio Carmelo, over in Uruguay, came out at one o'clock with the news that last night the revolutionary forces had sent an ultimatum to President Castillo, demanding a change in his international policy and immediate compliance with inter-American pacts.

By four o'clock all the troops had reached the central district. General Rawson with Colonel Montes, his aide, had previously driven to the Circulo Militar and there held a protracted conference with political and military leaders. The official Government station must have been taken over about that time, because it started to announce Rawson's departure from the Club and asked people to gather in the Plaza de Mayo. Officers began arriving at the Casa Rosada, and there was a great stir all over the building. Crowds of public employees filled the windows of the Casa Rosada and the near-by municipal offices. General Rawson stepped out on the Casa Rosada balcony around 5.20 p.m. There was terrific cheering. Ramirez stood nervously at his side. People whispered that he had spent the previous night and this day a prisoner, by Castillo's orders, and that this accounted for Rawson's leading the revolutionary troops. However, Rawson said nothing about Ramirez and took all responsibility for the movement. In his speech, delivered in a husky, typically barracks-room voice, Rawson said:

THE ARMY has been obliged to turn out, not in revolt, but to comply with Constitutional precepts. The National Constitution concedes the Army the right to maintain law and order. Law has not been maintained; order appears only on the surface. It was therefore necessary to safeguard principles of morality and culture that the Army should intervene, and this the Army has done. This patriotic task, shared by the naval forces, has been accomplished. The people may have faith in the country's armed forces as they will be responsible for the deeds of this Government.

He said the movement was entirely non-political, and added:

Communism threatens to encamp itself upon our soil, weakened by the lack of social welfare. Justice, which should be unassailable, has lost its moral authority. The armed institutions have been neglected and the armed forces improvidently dealt with. The education of our children is far removed from God's doctrines, and the instruction of young men embodies no respect for God or love of country. It is inconceivable that the future Government could remedy such grave ills when those who would assume governmental functions are bound by political promises and deep-rooted self-interest.

Most people took from this an implication that the weakening of the armed forces meant the military hope to get arms from the United States, which Castillo had been unable to obtain. The "proposed future Government" meant the Patron Costas deal put through by Castillo. Rawson concluded:

Señoras y Señores, before I conclude these words, I beg you to show your appreciation of these young conscripts who have fallen and join me in crying: Long Live Argentina!

There was a terrific ovation, although Rawson had omitted saying anything about the question that was uppermost in everybody's minds: How did the new Government stand *re* the Axis?

After the Rawson balcony speech there was still plenty of excitement around town. The Boston Bank building, which houses the United States Embassy offices, was surrounded by heavy crowds overflowing from the plaza a block away. In the excitement one of the boys in our Chamber of Commerce got shot in the leg. When seven o'clock came, the crowds apparently decided the main excitement for the day was over and began going home. Rawson and Ramírez stood for some time on the balcony watching the crowds mill past. When a group of Fresco's nationalists marched by raising their arms in the fascist salute, they were conveniently looking another way. I heard someone say that if this were a pro-democratic movement, they could quite easily have had them arrested on the spot, and with every show of legality too, since such *manifestaciones* are contrary to law.

By eight o'clock, when I finished writing my round-up cable, the streets were fairly well deserted. The police had broadcast the warning that any attempt at disorder would be energetically suppressed and this announcement continued in varying forms throughout the night.

As I made my way home, troops were on guard in front of public buildings. The police, who had been taking military orders all along, were chasing people off the streets and telling everybody to go home and stay there. I stopped in at one of the broadcasting stations and found they had a cavalry captain as "observer" and four conscripts in the news department. The captain was an ardent Rawson fan. Two of the conscripts thought they had marched from Campo Mayo to defend Castillo, the other two thought they were on the way to install Ramírez. The important thing is that they all followed where they were led.

The censorship has so far held up all cables giving any interpretation of the activities of the day, although the wire services have been able to get brief messages which must certainly have caused plenty of excitement in the States, to judge from the queries that I've been getting. The B.B.C. has had fairly accurate reports of the movement in its newscasts, although it seems to have an optimistic impression of the international stand, which I don't share. There are still plenty of questions unanswered. I don't yet know much about Rawson, except that he's an ex-cavalry man and a close friend of Ramírez'. They have been pals since they entered military college some forty years ago. Ramírez was one of the higher ranking officers who took part in the 1930 revolutionary movement. At that time he was a lieutenant colonel and, according to his own statement, was one of the first to move against President Irigoyen, assisting General Uriburu to plan his uprising. Rear Admiral Sueyro, who seems to be the only top-ranking Navy man in the affair, was once Chief of the Argentine Naval Mission in the United States and was later promoted to command a cruiser division. His only claim to recognition, one of my cynical friends on *Crítica* explained, is the fact that when he was commanding the naval forces at Mar del Plata a couple of years back two units of the fleet collided and sank. There was an official inquiry and Sueyro was exonerated of blame, but it was generally felt that he hadn't shown much brilliance.

(Later)

My cable has been cleared after five hours' delay.

According to Radio Carmela, the *Drummond* has arrived near Carmelo, on the Uruguayan side of the Rio de la Plata. Some of the Cabinet Ministers landed via a launch to seek accommodation in a hotel, as there wasn't sufficient room aboard. One of the Ministers is said to require medical attention. The Carmelos are reported to have hooted at them, "*Viva la Democracia!*" If Castillo begs for hospitality from Amézaga and his wife over in Montevideo, he will create a most embarrassing situation for them. Señora Amézaga was the Castillos' guest only a couple of weeks ago, for the 25th of May celebrations.

There is some speculation locally as to what *políticos*, if any, will be incorporated in the new Government. According to certain reports, Dr. Saavedra Lamas, Dr. Leopoldo Melo and Dr. Palacios, all pro-democratic, left in a car for the port during the afternoon with the idea of following Castillo and persuading him to resign peaceably.

There are still conjectures as to whether the Navy will take the whole movement calmly, or whether Castillo could rally it to his side. On the whole, however, no one sincerely believes that anyone at all would come out in support of Castillo. The motto seems to be: Good Riddance! Provided it's not a case of frying pan into fire! At all events, it is now a case of me to bed!

JUNE 5th (early)

Before I start out on another mad rush today, I want to set down a couple of things I omitted in last night's account. In the first place, the actual handing over of the Casa Rosada to the military forces. As Castillo and all his men had dropped everything and fled, young José María Paz Anchorena, one of the presidential secretaries was the only one left in charge. His wife was so fearful for his safety that she drove to the Casa Rosada and sat in her car waiting for him. No one could persuade her to leave. Her stand was so dignified and

so much in contrast to that of the hot-footing Cabinet, that she earned the whole-hearted admiration of the crowd. I understand the husband handed over to Rawson, then asked for permission to resign and depart, which was granted, much to everyone's relief.

According to rumor, Culaciatti yesterday asked for asylum at the Chilean Embassy, but I haven't been able to check on that. One of the local newsmen told me last night that until some months ago Culaciatti had been very friendly with Patron Costas. Differences over politics were so strong, however, they had ceased greeting each other in the streets.

Latest news of Culaciatti is that he arrived at the dock yesterday just as the *Drummond* was pulling away. He was able to board her only by flinging himself from the dock onto the stern rail of the ship, where he clung until he was hoisted up. He hit his mouth against the deck and was rather damaged. This story has provoked hilarious mirth throughout newspaper circles.

First thing this morning, the State radio issued an official bulletin, announcing that the day must not be considered a holiday. All public offices are to function normally, and all personnel should present themselves at their desks. The bulletin also denied rumors that the Federal Attorney, Dr. Gustavo Carabello, had been appointed to the Secretaryship of the Presidency. This is a good sign; Carabello is said to have sold Argentine citizenship papers to anyone willing to pay him fees as low as 200 pesos.

The B.B.C. announced in its early morning news that the *Drummond* had arrived off Carmelo and that some of Castillo's Ministers had disembarked. The President himself preferred to remain aboard. The vessel was supposed to have sent a wireless to Montevideo asking for permission to enter that port. London also reported that Sir David Kelly had sent dispatches to London reporting that General Rawson had sent a naval aide with complimentary greetings and notifying him that he had formed a Provisional Government under the Argentine Constitution and in accordance with democratic principles. This report went on to say that Elmer Davis of the O.W.I. had stated in Washington today that the revolution, carried out almost without bloodshed, meant that the conservative and military classes understand that the Axis has lost the war and that the time has come

to split away. He qualified this by saying Castillo's own men decided they had backed the losing horse. Davis is off base!

JUNE 5th (late)

This has been a day with plenty of developments!

The morning was quiet. Yesterday's events naturally crowded everything else off the front pages; but the papers everybody wanted to see were the Nazi-fascist sheets, for we figured they would give the tipoff as to the real character of the new government. *Cabildo*, Fresco's morning tabloid, which had been so loud in praising Castillo's neutrality, teed off by praising the military coup in the strongest terms. Is it because they actually participated in it or are they merely climbing on the bandwagon and taking part of the credit in order to show the new powers that they, at least, are enthusiastic? *Cabildo's* about-face is so apparent that it should be obvious to anybody. However, no one can be sure how the military will take it. While devoting column after column to the actual events, the other papers refrain from saying what they think of the new Government. They did emphasize, however, that everything was quiet in the interior.

Shortly before midday, the minesweeper on which Castillo fled anchored along a deserted wharf in down-river provincial La Plata, capital of the province of Buenos Aires. Castillo, tired, disheveled and with heavy rings under his twitching eyes, disembarked, followed by two Ministers, Culaciatti and Rear Admiral Fincatti, Minister of Marine. There were few people there to greet him, nobody to shout, and none of the other Ministers who had joined him in flight to step down the gangplank. At three o'clock in the afternoon the secretary of the Junta de Gobierno gave out an official statement declaring that there was "perfect tranquility" in the entire country and that Castillo had resigned. Apparently the resignation order was signed in the headquarters of the Army's second division in La Plata. After signing his resignation, Castillo was allowed to return to Buenos Aires and his private residence, but Culaciatti and Agricultural Minister Amadeo y Videla, it was an-

nounced, were under detention. No one knows yet where Ruiz Guíñazú, Rothe (Minister of Education) and Acevedo are.

The early afternoon papers which have just appeared still say that the new Government will be made up of high Army, Navy and civil personalities but mention no names, only Rawson and Ramírez. Guessing in print is dangerous. *Crítica* says that the Government, without altering the policy of neutrality, will better Argentina's position vis-a-vis the United States. The diplomatic representatives of the American nations met around midnight last night in the residence of the Chilean Ambassador, Conrado Rios Gallardo, to exchange information, but so far nothing is known about their decision, not even off the record. Rawson has also been in conference with the sub-secretaries of all the Ministries, apparently to find out more details on what has been going on. The Directive Committee of the Radical Party has issued a statement declaring its faith in the leaders of the triumphant revolution and held the conviction that "they would do the utmost possible to aid the moral and political health of the nation." This is the first statement by any political group. It may be genuine, or simply designed to improve their standing with the new government. Many people are recalling General Uriburu's 1930 military coup when Irigoyen was kicked out. That appears to have been a bloodier affair, with the public participating far more.

(Later)

At 8:30 tonight all radio stations announced the new military Cabinet. Rawson, as was generally expected, is to be President. Rear Admiral Saba H. Sueyro is Vice-President and Rear Admiral Segundo Storni, Minister of the Interior. The others are Ramírez in the War Ministry, Rear Admiral Benito Sueyro in the Ministry of Marine, Diego I. Mason in Agriculture, General Juan I. Pistarini in Public Works and General Domingo Martinez in Foreign Affairs. The greatest interest, however, is in the two civilians, José Maria Rosa, as Minister of Finance, and Dr. Horacio Calderon, Minister of Public Instruction. The late editions of the afternoon papers say that the news of the revolution has been well received in various countries of the Americas, especially in Bolivia and in Uruguay. The text of Castillo's

resignation is spread over the front pages and there are detailed descriptions of the shooting at the Escuela Mecanica de la Armada with pictures of some of the injured in heavy bandages. No figures have yet been released about the number killed and injured. Rawson has sent telegrams to the governors of all the provinces and territories stating that "necessary measures would be taken to implement the purposes of the revolution," and that the governors should take steps to insure maintenance of quiet in their districts. It is also announced that this morning the Supreme Court met but did not officially deal with the question of the new Government. The restrictions on outgoing cables have been somewhat relaxed and I learned that my story written last night was one of the first to be cleared. There is still a great deal of speculation, but I will know more tomorrow about who the new members of the Cabinet are.

(Added note)

Local newspapermen who have been up at the Casa Rosada say the new Government is holding all-night sessions. As they had little sleep on the nights of the third and fourth their nerves are getting frayed, and the walls of the old palace are vibrating to the sound of very undiplomatic language exchanged over the council table. There are even stories of generals and other ranks engaging in fisticuffs.

JUNE 6th

A great wave of dissatisfaction has swept over the country accompanied by a feeling among the people that somehow they've been cheated. The naming of a Cabinet comprising five generals, three admirals and two civilians has failed to convince many that General Rawson intends to follow any really strong pro-democratic line. Although announcement of the Government's political policy is promised for today, so far the only guide to its future course has been Rawson's double-talk balcony declarations and public manifestos which can be interpreted two ways. Rawson has sent an Army captain, Oscar Martinez, to call on members of the foreign diplo-

matic corps, notify them of the movement and explain the reasons which led the military chiefs to depose the Castillo Administration.

Martinez has given verbal assurance to the various Governments that conduct of foreign affairs would be "in accordance with the principles of American solidarity and fulfilment of all pacts." However, this is not completely believed by many realistic Embassies including, it is said, our own. More emphatic assurances and proof are desired. One of the civilian members of the Cabinet, José Maria Rosa, is owner of the blacklisted *Editorial Argentina*, which publishes the Nazi daily, *Pampero*. The Minister of Public Instruction, Dr. Horacio Calderon, is also known for participation in nationalist movements. Naming of General Domingo Martinez, Chief of Police of the Federal Capital of Buenos Aires under Castillo, to the important Foreign Ministry is held the least assuring indication. Martinez has long been known for his energetic breaking up of such pro-democratic activities as the mass meetings of the Junta de la Victoria, the big pro-United Nations women's organization and of Accion Argentina, pro-democratic youth movement, with hundreds of branches throughout the interior. That Martinez was chosen for the top Cabinet spot is regarded by the people as especially indicative that Rawson has been unable, or unwilling, to appoint the highest-standing non-political personalities. This would have been the best evidence that he intended to follow his announced plan of non-politics.

The people feel left out of the movement. The leaders are not their leaders. If at the beginning they cheered wildly in the belief that the reactionary Government of Castillo was out, second thought convinces many that they may not have anything very much better. The move certainly was not as Elmer Davis announced by short-wave radio last night—"a United Nations uprising."

However, workers' groups, student organizations and others in the forefront of the liberal movement, are beginning to say that they will demand a pro-democratic stand. "The ball has started rolling and won't stop," many have told me. If Rawson turns out to be just an old-line *caudillo* in a new guise or a seeker of power for the Army alone, it will be extremely difficult to keep the lid on the people. Predictions are being made freely that a real "people's movement" may occur unless Argentines are convinced soon that the change

follows the pro-democratic line of at least eighty percent of the population. It is felt that the Rawson Government, which desperately needs United States and Latin-American recognition, may go only far enough to gain approval without actually meaning it. Obtaining Lend-Lease arms from Washington is known to be one of the principal points, particularly among Army chiefs fearful of Brazil's growing power.

Realistic observers say that if Washington demands strong assurance, the Rawson Administration will follow the pro-democratic line. But if Washington accepts half-hearted offers and is followed by other Latin-American Republics, then the goose is cooked for pro-democratic hopes. Some fear that London, which is far more optimistic than our diplomats, may rush in over-quick. Also significant is the fact that the Nazi *Pampero* has been unchecked in going all-out in describing the movement as "an accomplishment" of their program. This Goebbels' sheet and the morning paper *Cabildo* say that all the planks in recent manifestos and speeches are their points, particularly the anti-communist and anti-United States and anti-British investment pledges and those favoring the Catholic Church. Some of this may be just bandwagon-climbing, but the tone of these sheets as contrasted with the reserved attitude of leading pro-democratic papers is indicative. *Mundo*, the largest circulation morning tabloid, pulled in its horns this morning after favorable, somewhat wish-thinking editorializing on Saturday. The totalitarian sheets, of course, ignore Castillo entirely. In fact, one of the strongest reactions to the entire business might be summed up in the words, "We're glad he's gone." Castillo has been found to be a man without friends. Any feeling that anybody would rise to his defense seems washed down the drain. Incidentally, the only Castillo Cabinet members retained are Miguel Culaciatti, Interior, and Daniel Amadeo y Videla, Agriculture, both in the national penitentiary.

In the midst of intense speculation regarding the Army Cabinet choices and attempts to determine just who will follow the new Administration, only one point is clear. The Radical Party which is the big liberal group, has given official, frank support to the Provisional Government. Others, including the important Socialists and Progressive Democrats have not yet taken a stand. The *politicos* and the people want to know if Rawson will guarantee free elec-

tions and, especially, how soon? The coup may cause realignment of all political parties. Too many remember that after the famed Uriburu coup in 1930 the new Government held on and on without the promised free elections. It's also important to emphasize how few persons really were in on the move. Only a handful of high-ranking generals and colonels knew what was up and many went through Friday's momentous events without realizing what side they were on. Soldiers and lower-ranking officers, especially, weren't let in and there are now said to be many still unsatisfied.

To the cable, I added this note:

"UNCERTAIN WHEN THIS WILL REACH YOU BUT ABOVE PROBABLY REPRESENTS FIRST COMPLETELY UNLOCALLY AFFECTED ROUNDUP STOP ADVISE CAUTION ON USING OVER-OPTIMISTIC UNIPRESS SINCE RAWSON ANXIOUS CREATE FAVORABLE OUTSIDE OPINION AND SOME AGENCIES OVERBOARDING IN FILING STUFF THEY THINK WILL PUT THEM IN GOOD GRACES."

(Later)

Checking around after getting out my cable has disclosed the following additional points:

Many of the soldiers who marched in the coup were under the impression that bettering of relations with the United States and the other American Republics and the fulfilment of Argentina's international obligation as subscribed to at the Rio Conference was the principal purpose. No further mention has been made of this.

No comment has been forthcoming from Berlin because, according to short-wave radio, the D.N.B. was "not permitted to contact its correspondents in Buenos Aires by reason of the strict censorship."

The pro-democratic *La Mañana* of Montevideo said this morning: "It was thought at first that the purposes to be pursued were those of the establishment of a democratic regime and installation of guarantees of political liberty. But the announcement of the incorporation in the new Government of certain persons is interpreted as a revealing indication that the triumphant revolutionary Government is far from having attained the character which had been attributed to it. In Radical circles, and among the Socialists, who had adopted

the position of prudent expectancy, signs of discordance with the new situation are seen." Montevideo, which, like many another backfence neighbor, can often judge what's going on across the way, is sitting back and awaiting developments with a more or less jaundiced eye.

JUNE 7th

Rawson is no longer President, the Cabinet has been entirely shifted and the talk of friction with the top-ranking officers is on the increase. It's been another heavy day, starting early this morning. Around six o'clock I was told that Rawson had resigned after an all-night Cabinet session which must have been terrific. Ramírez will take over. As the story stands now, one group of officers within the Cabinet wanted to break relations with the Axis immediately; another bunch favored a go-slow policy. Who is on which side is impossible to dope out. Some insist Rawson favored the immediate break and that Ramírez was against it. In contradiction to that, however, there is the fact that Rawson named two outright pro-fascists in his Cabinet. Rumors about the makeup of the new Cabinet to be named by Ramírez are spreading like wildfire. At the news agencies and the papers it's anybody's guess as to how things might turn out. The crisis within the new Government must have been pretty strong to cause Rawson to resign. With him, of course, went the whole Cabinet—a customary procedure here. This will allow Ramírez a chance to pick his own aides.

The radio has been going all day with military marches and brief announcements telling people to keep calm, to pay no attention to false rumors and to await further official announcements. The wildest kind of guesses are going on as to who will constitute the new Cabinet. The reaction to the naming of Rosa, Calderon and Martinez has been as strong in the States as here, so apparently the story on who was who managed to get out. The incoming dispatches I've seen indicate that newspapers up in the States have started to pull in their horns somewhat, and are no longer as convinced as they were that this is a pro-democratic move. These go on the "dead hook" at

the news offices—they can't be printed. Until the makeup of the new Cabinet is known, anything is a guess. Conferences are going on in Government House, but we can't get anything definite. Will have to hold up filing or phoning any further story until the Cabinet is announced and this apparently won't be until early evening at least.

(Later)

Shortly after five o'clock all stations told listeners to stand by for an announcement regarding the new Cabinet. It was explained that the names would not be announced until just before swearing-in time, scheduled for 6 P.M. A few minutes before six the new Cabinet was named as follows: Ramírez as President, Rear Admiral Saba Sueyro as Vice-President, Rear Admiral Segundo Storni for Minister of Foreign Affairs. Brigadier General Edelmiro Farrell was named Minister of War, Rear Admiral Benito Sueyro was retained as Minister of Marine and General Diego I. Mason will continue holding the Agricultural portfolio.

Jorge Santamarina was the only civilian named; he gets the Finance post. Colonel Alberto Gilbert was made Minister of the Interior and Colonel Elbio C. Anaya Minister of Justice and Education.

Ramírez, in a speech immediately after his being sworn in, said:

Argentina affirms its traditional policy of friendship and loyal co-operation with the American nations in accordance with existing pacts. In respect to the rest of the world, its policy is, for the present, neutrality. The Provisional Government further believes it necessary to express adherence to the principle of absolute autonomy of States to rules themselves. It will not tolerate any foreign interference since the Argentine people maintain, and will maintain, through all possible vicissitudes, a republican form of government in conformance with her Constitution.

The optimists have seized on the statement about "traditional friendship with the Americas" and the phrase "neutrality for the present" as indicating the new Government will eventually break with the Axis. The line about "absolute autonomy" is apparently in-

tended as a warning to the States that Argentina is going to run things her own way. Some reports have it that Ramírez is more strongly pro-Allied than Rawson. Still, you can find as many to argue the other way around. In any case, the new Government is certainly trying to get the people to stop their out-loud guessing. The radio has been repeating warnings about disseminating rumors, and listeners are also reminded that the state of martial law imposed Friday still exists. Under this the Army has the power to take the most severe measures against anyone spreading false information. There won't be time to look into the Cabinet situation until tomorrow.

JUNE 8th

The most intensive speculation is now going on over the future policy of the so-called Provisional Government. Rumors are so thick that all Buenos Aires radio stations are booming half-hourly warnings that the severest action possible under martial law will be taken against any gossip-spreaders. Records of every member of the Cabinet are being searched not only by people in excited café-table conversations but by the Embassies of every American Republic, every class of individual and collective group. Generally, reaction is fairly good or at least it's better than it was to the Rawson Cabinet. Since all but one of the present Cabinet members are *militares* they're men who've not been talkers. From what facts are available, Ramírez, as Minister of War, led the group within the Army who were trying to pressure Castillo to clean up some of the graft going on in his Cabinet and therefore is likely to demand plenty of investigations. Of the others, Vice-President Sueyro is generally rated as a Navy man who is friendly to our cause; Gilbert is described as extremely able and pro-democratic, as is Foreign Minister Storni. Of the others, comparatively little is known, although the lone civilian Cabinet member, Jorge Santamarina, is pro-American and has not hesitated to say so in the past. The Provisional Government's declaration of policy is, of course, the center of interest. The big issue, it is agreed, is that of recognition by the United States and the other American nations. The bargaining period is now beginning, and it may finish

quickly or perhaps start new troubles. Ramírez and his Cabinet would, of course, like to receive quick recognition and with as few commitments on Argentina's part as possible. The United States and other American Republics, however, have, in a sense, the power to make or break them. My diplomatic sources say that it is certain Washington will expect something far stronger than words before extending the handshake of recognition and promising tanks, planes and guns which Army leaders feel Castillo could not get them. How strong a stand Washington takes and who jockeys whom can be said to be the crux of the situation. The best opinion I've been able to get holds that the American nations, whose local Ambassadors and Ministers have been midnight-meeting regularly, will work together and insist upon an Axis break before they come through. If the Governments work this way it is felt the practical demonstration of Continental unanimity would offset any Axis diplomatic move. One country might jump the gun, however, and stampede the others, or Berlin might suddenly decide to say yes without being invited to extend recognition. The Axis, incidentally, has been extremely quiet in commenting so far, although *Panipero*, *Cabildo* and the others are still tossing verbal bouquets and trying to create the impression that all the moves by Army leaders for the ousting of Castillo were "their moves" and "their platforms." That the new Cabinet realizes it will be subjected to outside pressure is apparent from its statement that under no circumstances would it "tolerate foreign interference." Some pro-democratic Argentines feel this means they simply don't want to be pushed and will hold on as long as possible and try to get as much as they can.

A good impression has been created by the first predications of the Ramírez domestic policy. The Government House correspondents were given a list of Government aims which they were to send up without quotation as a trial balloon. The points pledge strict observance of the Argentine Constitution and setting a date for a general election in which a new President, Vice-President and members of Congress would be chosen. Other points were the establishment of honesty in the Administration, dissolution of various Government bureaus, investigations of certain smelly banking transactions and punishment of State officials who have been remiss or dishonest. The Government's way of letting it be known that this purported plat-

form was more or less official was to allow the papers to spread it without denial. People, however, are watching for other little things in an attempt to learn which way the wind is blowing.

There is the question of the Nazi papers which are still going strong. These sheets were with Castillo, but now they beat the drums as the true patriots. *Pampero's* low-cost mail franchise has been temporarily canceled, but this alone is not truly significant, since even the Castillo Administration has, on several occasions, revoked *Pampero's* second-class postal rates. The Nazi-inspired nationalists are also horning in on the movement. Whether this is done with Ramírez' approval or not, no one can yet say. After last night's inaugural ceremony, the most vocal demonstrators below the balcony of the Casa Rosada (from which the new President spoke) were the well-organized, banner-waving mobs of the Alianza de Juventud Nacionalista, shouting: "*Neutralidad*" and "*Argentinos si, Judios (Jews) no,*" just as they did in their May Day parade. Police and soldiers, who had previously broken up all pro-democratic demonstrations, let these marchers continue unchecked, but I'd be careful about giving this too much meaning until seeing more.

I think it's important to note that the Argentine people, 80 percent of whom can safely be said to be entirely pro-democratic, still feel left out of the movement. So do most of the liberal political parties, although the Radicals have officially voiced approval. There is still an impression among most people that it is not *their* revolution; in fact, the word is no longer popularly used. There's still an impression that the coup, while admittedly against the unpopular Castillo policy, was even more the result of Army officers feeling that their code of honor was violated by local scandals and by the fact that neighboring nations, especially Brazil, were getting Lend-Lease arms and growing stronger than their country.

(Later)

The Government tonight lifted the decree of martial law and issued an official statement that Argentine rapprochement with the other American Republics would be accomplished "by acts." An official handout issued by the President's Press Office after a Cabinet meeting declared foreign relations would be regulated not only by words

but by acts "that will draw us even nearer to our American brothers." It added: "The Argentine attitude toward the war is considered to have been sufficiently clarified in a statement made yesterday by the Provisional Government." This apparently meant the statement referring to neutrality for the present. My confidential note to the editors tonight said:

"Suggested editorial slant might emphasize Washington's role in making or breaking stop should outpoint that while interference one thing granting recognition another and here's chance achieve results without dispatching a single Marine stop by way many Argentines personally asked me get across this idea to you."

JUNE 9th

Smiles of approval, a loosening of the cautious whispered conversations, restrained but optimistic editorials in the pro-democratic dailies are among the definite indications that in some quarters at least, the Argentine people are beginning to feel the new military Provisional Government may not be so bad after all. The Government's statement that its co-operation with the Pan-American Republics would not be confined to words but would be "proven by deeds" is making a good impression. Everybody considers this a step forward over Rawson's declaration of "friendship for the Americas but, for the present, neutrality toward the rest of the world." All things considered, that was the same verbal policy that Castillo maintained. The lifting of martial law following the first Cabinet session also caused a sigh of relief. And the fact that a sound businessman like Santamarina is in financial command has greatly encouraged business. Santamarina has certainly been a trump card. Colonel Gilbert, Minister of the Interior, has promised the newspapermen "co-operation" and even some of the pessimistic Fourth Estaters are thawing out a bit. However, foreign correspondents are still having difficulty getting out dispatches filed in Buenos Aires and some of the military censors, at least, are wielding their blue pencils far less than others. I know the personal element is important

in this. The wire services have found that what won't get by with the 3 P.M. censor frequently passes the five-o'clock man. But the censors are simply cutting out portions of stories to which they object instead of killing the entire cable as did Castillo's watchdogs. It is apparent that the military Cabinet is becoming aware that United States reaction and that of the other United Nations hasn't been too hot. Correspondents have been trying to explain to the military that easing the you-can't-say-anything attitude is one of the best ways to demonstrate that the coup isn't fascist. General impression is that the Provisional Government is determined to clean up, and its friends are convinced that it intends to find honest men in the country and then permit elections. Most soldiers, however, state that if they know Ramírez, once he's gotten hold of things he'll stay on and on. Some of them who don't like the United States too much, slyly add: "Just like Roosevelt."

There's less feeling that the Generals and Admirals will set up another Franco regime, but informed people to whom I've been talking continue to advise caution. They base their apprehensions on the fact that the Army has always been conservative and that it has had plenty of German influence. Any all-out change of heart toward the democracies must be watched with a microscope, they say. It is also pretty plain now that the United States and other American Republics will not grant the recognition the regime needs until they are sure this isn't simply the old one in a different dress. The diplomatic representatives of all the American Republics held their third meeting in the Uruguayan Embassy today, and we understand that most have sent home somewhat more favorable reports than previously. The Republics of this hemisphere are being urged to work in unison. There is still a possibility that the Axis may give the Provisional Government the "kiss-of-death" recognition. Such a move would certainly confuse the issue.

The papers today front-page Washington's story that the United States and Brazil had signed a new military accord permitting Brazilian nationals to serve in Uncle Sam's Army and Yanks in the Brazilian forces. This has further emphasized the desire of the Argentine military to reach some accord with Washington on the subject of tanks, planes and guns. From what I can gather, the Army still doesn't want to lease them—it wants to buy them. The Latin-Amer-

ican diplomats are working on their contacts in the Army to point out to Ramírez and those close to him that although Argentina wasn't invited to the Hot Springs Food Conference, there is still time to join in the Commission set up to implement that meeting. Selling her food supplies to the United Nations, now that the Argentine military is in charge, may be one of the major problems of the new regime. There is no doubt that the military—knowing food can be just as valuable to the United Nations as Argentina's severing her Axis ties—will hold out for as much as they can in deciding the question of a Berlin break. The Government's attitude toward the Nazi press and the still free communications with the Axis capitals are being watched. There is also considerable speculation as to the Mayoralty of the City of Buenos Aires. Carlos Alberto Pueyrredón, who is the present Mayor, was anxious to stay on when Rawson took over and called in his press friends to tell them so. Pueyrredón, descendant of one of the heroes of Argentine Independence, and a member of one of Argentina's wealthiest *estancia*-owning families, said he had always longed to clean up corruption and would enjoy collaborating with the new Government. I recall that not so long ago he had stated almost publicly that the situation of the country was deplorable and that in public departments wherever one poked a finger, pus was sure to emerge. Nevertheless, although an able administrator and scrupulously honest himself, his family and traditional ties with all sorts and conditions of people were so numerous, that the Municipal Departments had become a perfect teeming house of *recomendados*—persons for whom jobs had been found whether jobs were to be had or not. In the old days of the Municipal Council, it used to be a standing joke that business offices could be wallpapered with the notes of introduction given to job applicants by the Municipal Councillors. According to report, Pueyrredón, Junior, alone and unaided had almost managed to surpass the Councillors' record. Some people wonder whether it was Papa Pueyrredón, or Junior, who ran the municipality.

After Rawson resigned, however, Pueyrredón felt obliged to quit as a matter of principle and has seen Ramírez several times. Ramírez is supposed to have told Pueyrredón's Secretary that the Administration hoped to obtain the collaboration of men as honest as he. The name of General Pertiné is also being mentioned as a possible suc-

cessor. This is not encouraging as he is well known as a director of German firms like Siemens-Schuckert, etc.

We are getting more of the inside on how the coup actually took place. Last Thursday (June 3rd), according to one story, Ramírez summoned a few high-ranking Army officers and told them he was at odds with Castillo and that he would have to organize a coup, as Castillo refused to get rid of the corrupt Ministers. There was another big financial operation pending, this time in Culaciatti's department, and there were to be even more scandalous revelations of graft. Ramírez warned his colleagues that he would probably be placed under arrest, as happened, and entrusted them with the task of going ahead. Rawson, in charge of the cavalry Remount School, was the senior officer at the big barracks at Campo de Mayo. At three-thirty on the morning of Friday the 4th the young officers, including my informant, were called out and told. They at once swore allegiance to the new movement. The Communications people were ordered to take the Post Office and set off. Through a mistake made by a superior officer leading the column, they didn't proceed along Calle Blandengues and thus their lives were spared because otherwise they would have come in for the battle in front of the Mechanical School. The Communications unit proceeded along the Avenida Alvear, where they were stopped by a General of the Staff who asked:

"Lieutenant, where are you and your men going?"

"To the Post Office, under orders to occupy it, Sir."

"And who is your commanding officer?"

"Colonel so and so . . ."

They were allowed to proceed, but apparently a good many officers were ignorant of what was happening. According to my tipster, the whole thing was improvised so hastily that the Mechanical School hadn't been advised and put up resistance. Rawson's only part in the affair was meant to be that of organization of the march to the city. He seems to have had secret ambitions, however, and took advantage of the opportunity to declare himself leader of the movement. For reasons of military ethics, Ramírez couldn't put himself forward from the start, as he had been Minister of War under the deposed Government. Thus the early confusion. Rawson has many enemies in the Army and they say few would be inclined to

follow him. Some years back he had a duel with a General Menendez, which caused quite a stir, and Menendez has since been out for his skin.

Evidently there have been more deaths than the papers have been allowed to announce.

(Later)

The drive against "communists" which Rawson made clear in his Friday-afternoon balcony speech would be one of the principal aims of the Government has already begun. General Mendoza, Chief of Police, has issued this order: "It has been learned that communistic elements intend issuing pamphlets giving their opinion of the change of Government. You will instruct all police units and troops under your orders that, on no account, must these leaflets be distributed in the area under your control and should you discover that this propaganda is being issued you will detain the responsible parties, conveying them together with the literature impounded to the special section."

A good many alleged Reds are already reported picked up and being held incommunicado. More are being shipped South to Ushuaia.

JUNE 10th

This from today's cable: "The honeymoon period of the Argentine Provisional Government is now in full swing. But realistic observers still point out that caution is necessary before it will be possible to determine the real meaning of the past week's events and future policy internally and re the United Nations. Not unexpectedly, military-minded Brazil was the first American Republic to recognize the Ramírez Government, followed by neighboring Paraguay and Bolivia. The Argentine people and the new Government as well are far more concerned about Washington's attitude. It is freely whispered that the United States still holds the power to make or break the Administration."

The Casa Rosada and the new Ministry buildings around bustling

Plaza de Mayo have been thronged during the past few days with all types of visitors anxious to *saludar* the generals, admirals, colonels and their sabre-clashing aides now in command. Such back-thumping *abrazos* are Latin second nature and it is impossible for even an old-timer to judge their sincerity. *Adhesiones* or testimonials of approval and support are also pouring in—some probably just bandwagon-climbing—and are being passed along to the press by the Government as indicating just how popular the new movement is. The parade of well-wishers has been headed by representatives of the powerful Sociedad Rural but, like the others, that doesn't necessarily mean the *estancieros* are behind the Government. They, like our own lobbyist organizations, simply maintain the policy of always being with the "ins" and exerting their own kind of pressure in the right places.

Castillo himself hasn't appeared since he sent his resignation. He has given a statement that his friends should support the new Government, adding: "I have not the least desire to return and would not do so even if begged to by the people." There's little chance of any such thing happening and his declaration has brought little but a crop of new jokes in the sidewalk cafés along Avenida de Mayo, almost all connected with Castillo's run-out trip across the river. The growing list of small and large business organizations putting themselves on record as supporting the new regime and the Government's anxiety to inform the press, especially the United States correspondents about them, is indicative of how much Ramírez wants the world to feel that he has popular support. The labor associations and syndicates have been less enthusiastic, however, and, at a meeting in the National Labor Department offices yesterday, they held themselves back, despite gentle hinting, to "expressing faith that the Government would do its utmost to carry out its pledges and clean up the scandals."

What is still missing are any definite stands by the strongly democratic political groups and the university and other student bodies. The students, always an important factor in past revolutionary movements, haven't appeared much in this one. The only youth groups visible have been the Nazi stooge nationalists, who, some people believe, are merely trying to push themselves in and who, they say, were as surprised as anyone at what happened. Others see,

however, a good deal of similarity between Ramírez' program and that of the nationalists.

I'd say the majority of the people haven't made up their minds about the Government. They know that the coup which threw out Castillo's isolationists wasn't their coup. Though most of them were against Castillo, they aren't exactly sure whether they should be for this new set-up. Doing my own Gallup, I found that trying to get a reaction generally brought a shrug of the shoulders and a don't-know-exactly-what-to-think expression. Local newspapermen are more definite; they describe the new Government (in private, of course, and looking back over their shoulders for the "Gestapo") as "fascist as it can be." Judging from the statements and decrees issued by the military, the Army officers bustling through the cold unheated halls and anterooms of the Casa Rosada, should be droopy-eyed. Their night-long sessions and the constant rapid-fire changes have certainly kept them on the go. The new military Ministers have been putting in long days behind their desks, and the soldiers have gone back to Campo Mayo and to Ciudadela, home of the Second Division. The heavily decorated Grenadiers in their black shiny patent-leather cavalry boots and blue-red gold-buttoned uniforms have taken up their posts at the entrance to the Casa Rosada. It is anybody's guess as to where they were during the coup. The wounded are reported doing O.K. at the hospitals; at last they've found out what all the shooting was for.

Yesterday's Cabinet meeting, I think, showed that this was no social revolution. However, the Government intends at least to court the good will of the population. It was decided to make an immediate drive on the cost of living: reducing rents, suppressing usury, and seeing what can be done about unemployment. Apparently on the strength of this, the price of meat and potatoes dropped 20 to 30 percent.

The number of probes the Government will have to make, causes me to wonder just how long it will take and how many Tom Deweys and Ferdinand Pecoras will be needed to clean up the mess left by the previous *Poder Ejecutivo*. I talked to a number of officials about how they plan to proceed and from them have had an assurance that the probes will be "ruthless, regardless of where the blame falls." Trials, they say, will in most cases be civil ones. The Argentine court

system doesn't include jury trials, however, and the slow legal procedure involves paper work that means an avalanche of stamped forms, with charges and answers (torts and retorts) going on forever.

Though the public may never get the inside story, people are starting to understand now, as never before, how the fascist-patterned state of siege imposed in December, 1941, supposedly to impose neutrality, prevented them from learning via the newspapers or otherwise just how foul conditions were. The healthy democratic processes, they are saying now, were thus bottled up and finally had to burst. And though it was the outraged Army sense of honor and not pressure by the people that caused the explosion, the people hope it will react to their favor. They also hope the lesson will be heeded elsewhere. The scandals which must be probed are so numerous that in my cable story today I was only able to list the most important. Especially outrageous was the sugar price rise for which the Minister of Agriculture, among others, must answer. As recently rigged by Castillo, the increase of five cents a kilo would have brought more than twenty-four million pesos to the sugar barons of the Province of Salta and Tucumán, including more than two and a half millions to Castillo's hand-picked crown prince, Patron Costas. The idea was that the unpopularity of the move would have fallen on Castillo, who would never have won any Gallup polls anyway, while filling the political war chest to the lid. Few papers said anything about it before, but now many are finger-pointing. There is the loan-shark scandal, which particularly hit small wage earners in Buenos Aires and in the interior cities of Rosario and Sante Fe. There is the rubber scandal, over artificially raised prices and distribution of still unrationed tires. And there is the steel *affaire*, whereby local firms, with the aid of some Government people, cornered the market and held out for fantastic profits. The *combustibles* scandal, especially gasoline rationing, was engineered by the State Oil Monopoly, and its favorite child, the commission-raking Automobile Club. The probe of the Buenos Aires Corporacion de Transportes whose taking over of the colorful, picture-tiled subways and the independent little *colectivo* buses, caused a terrific public reaction. The National Lottery, the distribution of film raw stock and many other chicaneries can be added to the list.

Army indignation against the chief culprits in all these graft

stories—Culaciatti and Amadeo y Videla—is said to be intense. Rawson, I hear, was for shooting them on sight, but wiser counsel prevailed. The Ramírez faction insists that everything must be cleaned up in a thoroughly legal fashion, but Culaciatti has certainly been subjected to what is tantamount to the old third-degree. For one thing, it is unheard of to toss misfeasance cases like this in the National Penitentiary, like ordinary *reos*. After Castillo's resignation had been accepted, both Culaciatti and Amadeo y Videla were allowed to return to their homes and it was assumed they'd be kept under protective arrest. That night, however, Rawson sent a squadron of soldiers under a sergeant to arrest Culaciatti. They forced their way into the darkened house, dashed upstairs to the ex-minister's bedroom, and found him sleeping. On being told he was a prisoner, he behaved with very little dignity, protesting that he was *Dr. C.* and an ex-Minister. The sergeant was adamant. His *senora* with admirable coolness and courage packed him a bag, got him dressed somehow and soothed him into a state of compliance with military orders. Culaciatti then told the sergeant to pick up his bag and take it along, but the sergeant explained: "You are the accused *sujeto* Culaciatti, and prisoners carry their own bags." It must have been a horrible experience for the portly ex-Minister to find himself inside one of his own Black Marias, on the way to unknown horrors in prison; more so, because when the van drove up to the National Pen in the Avenida Las Heras, no one there had orders to receive him. After some altercation with the governor of the prison, the van drove off once more to another jail. Meanwhile Culaciatti apparently got the idea the delay was due to the arrangements for his firing squad. When he was eventually admitted to the jail, he passed out and had to be taken to the infirmary, utterly unconscious. In spite of all this, I have it on very good authority that so far no definite proofs have been found against Culaciatti. It will take a great deal of investigation before anything is discovered which may definitely convict him.

Foreign Minister Storni gave an interview to the foreign press today, in which he said that "Step by step, the Government's actions would confirm the policy of inter-American solidarity" and that "Argentina's foreign policy would be one of meticulous compliance with obligations toward the American countries."

The first step came tonight when the Government decreed that no more diplomatic code messages could be sent by wireless. Bluntly, this means that the Axis Embassies can no longer file their 100 words per day as had been the practice. These coded messages were particularly cited in Washington's previous memoranda to Buenos Aires. Some observers think it is a good sign, but I'm a little skeptical, since all it means, to my mind, is that code which is obvious code cannot be sent. In other words, the Germans can still send all the *straight* messages they wish. For them it isn't difficult to hide what they want to say. Some pro-democratic people are tickled over the decree and its portents. They say Storni is probably the most pro-democratic member of the new Government. Impressive in size, patriarchal, good-looking and gray-haired, he appears every inch the retired Admiral he has been since 1935. He is also an authority on international law, long his hobby. His blue eyes have a pleasant, honest twinkle, and he talked to us openly and frankly. He needed no prodding to make his statements regarding collaboration and said that he and his office would always be glad to receive "the boys." Many of the correspondents seem quite favorably impressed with him and he is already a favorite. In discussing foreign affairs he mentioned friendly Argentine ties with Britain and France and, significantly, "the Italian people." But when reference was made to the fact that Germany's announcement of recognition was the first to come out this morning, he said nothing and just smiled a bit owlishly.

JUNE 11th

The United States has recognized the new Ramírez military Government! Officialdom is unrestrained in its expressions of delight and the reaction among the public—which got the news in the late mid-day editions—is also generally good. I said in my cable today that it was important that many of the strongest pro-democratic leaders privately and very cautiously expressed regret that F.D.R. had not waited a while longer to obtain more abundant proof of the intentions and aims of the new Administration, not only in regard to the

Axis but so far as restoration of an internal democracy is concerned. These people—and the number is considerable—felt that by holding back a while longer, the United States and the democracies would have obtained far more, not only in persuading Ramírez to sever Axis ties, but to adopt a truly energetic attitude regarding Berlin's fifth columnists still using Argentina as an Axis gateway to this hemisphere. They also feel that our watching and waiting would have accomplished more than a show of force or the slightest threatening in convincing the military and the Argentine people that we were not merely satisfied in having Axis-aiding, fascist-minded Castillo thrown out, but, as on the other war fronts, were battling for a truly democratic world in every sense.

Studying the events of the past week and searching out the prospects and possibilities for the future has convinced many observers to whom I have talked that what is likely to develop in Argentina is a Government very much like Brazil's, which is to say that, while it is with the United Nations, it certainly won't be the kind of democracy known in the United States or England, or even as good as Argentina had under some presidents. They think it will be what amounts to—and the word is used advisedly—a kind of "semi-dictatorship" which it is unofficially admitted, governs Brazil—despite the fact that it isn't something Good Neighbor Washington likes to talk about when referring to "our leading Latin-American Ally." Brazil seems to these observers to be more and more the model after which Argentina's new Provisional Government is patterning itself. Some of this is the flattery of jealousy; part is the desire to regain the Latin leadership which Argentina, under the now scuttled reactionaries, was unable to retain.

It was Brazil's growing power via Lend-Lease aid and other North American help that worried many of the top leaders of Argentina's *ejército* and helped bring about the coup. It just didn't seem healthy to many of these *militares* to let the once looked-down-upon tropical neighbor develop such hard muscles. Brazil, as the first hemisphere nation to grant recognition to the new Government, started the stampede of other Latin nations. Many feel the United States and Britain weren't over-anxious to jump in until they were more sure of Argentina's position. But once Brazil started, the die was cast and in quick order Argentina's border countries, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay

hopped in, followed by Brazil's boundary mates, Venezuela, Ecuador and so on. Brazil, incidentally, was reported to have had 200 North American planes ready and waiting to swoop in during the first uncertainty over General Rawson's Cabinet. This story, while perhaps just another yarn, reached such proportions that the Brazilian Ambassador had to issue one of the few formal denials given any of the thousands of lightning-spread tales.

Those who see a similarity between the present trend of Argentine officialdom and Brazil's, point out to me that Ramírez appears to be a *caudillo* of the Vargas type. Both are strong but subtle, both believe in making certain moves to appease public sentiment yet have their own way. Some Brazilian ideas already initiated here include an Official Press Bureau, far stricter control of radio and placing civil aviation under the Ministry of War. What pro-democratic elements fear is Brazil's fascist-patterned, Gestapo-like prohibition of free speech, from which Argentina was already suffering under Castillo, and the banning, whether official, or simply by continued existence of a military Government, of opposition political parties, as in Brazil. Castillo, while ham-stringing the opposition, never quite succeeded in really eliminating it. Also worrisome is Brazil's strong anti-Semitism, which, according to some people who've recently been there, has become almost a part of official policy. The Castillo Administration, while aiding such Jew-baiting publications as *Clarínada* with official institutional advertising, has otherwise permitted Jews and others almost complete religious freedom.

What Brazil has had, and what Argentina wants, however, is the kind of Lend-Lease air fields like those in Natal and Belem, but without strings of any kind, plus the type of Export-Import Bank aid which Warren Lee Pierson has been pushing for the Vargas Government, but on a less co-operative basis. Argentines have been hearing how Brazil is building two planes a day at Lago Santa and how the Brazilian's steel plant at Volta Redona materialized a 100-year-old dream which Argentina still has in the paper stage. They have also seen in the newsreels, read in the papers and heard on the radio about ship-building at Santos, skyscrapers in Sao Paulo and all kinds of *yanqui* dollars and goods elsewhere. They know the Argentine Army wants these things, but on the Army's own terms. How the military proposes to get them is the big question today.

I have been able to get some more information on Ramírez. He was born in the provincial meat-packing town of La Paz way up in the province of Entre Rios. His grandfather had a little farm near by and his father held a poorly paid job as chief of police. It was a middle-class family, probably poorer than the average Argentine middle-class family of today. There were four brothers. Pedro and two of his brothers went into the Army; the other remained in Entre Rios, became a merchant and farmer. At school at La Paz, Pedro played games and rode horses with Saba and Benito Sueyro, who went into the Navy and who today are Admirals in his Cabinet, Saba as Vice-President and Benito as Minister of Marine. As a boy, Ramírez was quiet, bright, interested in mechanical things and popular with the boys. At seventeen, he entered the Colegio Militar in Buenos Aires and became one of the best students in his class. It was here that he earned his nickname *Palito*—"Little Stick." He was as slender as a stick, and stiff in his manner and response to discipline. Some are saying now: "Maybe he'll not wield the big stick but just use a little one," which Argentines feel would not be so bad. One of his best friends at college was Rawson. Ramírez graduated and was commissioned a lieutenant at twenty. In 1911 he went to Germany and served as an officer in the famous *Fuertes Husaren Regiment*. Just before the outbreak of the First World War he returned to Argentina and entered the staff college with the rank of captain. His was the normal, average Army career, neither better nor worse than his brother officers. In 1927 he became commander of the Ninth Cavalry Regiment and adjutant and friend of General José Felix Uriburu. He took an active part in the coup of 1930 when the conservative Uriburu overthrew the Radical Irigoyen Government. It is said that Ramírez was one of the leading figures and planners of Uriburu's revolt, but after the victory he retired to the background. His only departure from the no-talk rule was when, in 1930, he published an open letter in *La Nacion* explaining the cause of the revolution and stating that Uriburu had given his word to the participating officers that the coup would not only restore military discipline, but, by improving the structure of the Army, create a new and better regime for the country. Ramírez must

have continued to hold such ideas during the past ten years—part of them spent as military attaché to Rome—because those motives appear now as the primary reasons for his coup.

His family has some revolutionary background. They say his grand-uncle, Pancho Ramírez, led a victorious revolt in Uruguay and also directed an armed force against Buenos Aires about 125 years ago. Ramírez' wife was Maria Ines Lobato, of Italian-Basque descent. She also comes from a poor middle-class family. Amply proportioned, but not exactly fat, she's about the same size as Ramírez, blue-eyed and not bad-looking in a hard, matriarchal sort of way. The Ramírezes have three daughters—all ugly—and one son. They live in a second-story, six-roomed apartment in a dark-gray, somber-looking building on Calle Santa Fe. Although people here move as often as in New York they have remained there nearly ten years, while *papá* was advancing from the rank of colonel to War Minister. They've never been ostentatious, keep two maids, which is not much for here, and have always stayed rather close to their large family. Uncles, aunts and cousins galore have, during the past week, been pouring into the Ramírez home. He apparently likes to have a crowd around him. When this week his brother, Colonel Ernesto Ramírez, was made Interventor of the Ramírez home province of Entre Ríos, some Argentines began whispering, "*Los Palitos empiezan a nadar.*" (The little sticks begin to swim.) Ramírez and his family are intensely devout Catholics. His daughters have all been educated in Catholic schools, and he himself is given to seeking advice from churchmen. I understand he is narrow-minded and bigoted but interested in social problems. He deplores many aspects of modern social life. Of a puritan stamp himself, he would have others live and think as he does. As to his personality, he is a heavy cigarette smoker, likes American brands and has a secret passion for candy. A cavalry man, his favorite exercise is riding, and his favorite game, the traditional Argentine card game of Truco, pastime of typical *Criollo* families. It requires a gift for repartee and is played with much interchange of *contrapunto*, what we would call line, and is excellent training for wit and quick-thinking.

His hobby is raising and training carrier pigeons. When he was War Minister, his enemies said that he spent more time teaching his birds to fly than he did his Army aviators. Rather intellectual, he

reads without plan but omnivorously, which is rare among Army officers. He speaks French and Italian fluently, and some English and German. Still interested in things mechanical, he's technically minded and friends say he regrets that he doesn't have time to play around with mechanics and gadgets as he did when a boy. He cares little for personal comfort; likes roughing it cavalry style.

Militarily precise, practiced in habits, he plans his day and gets upset if anything knocks out the schedule. An early riser, he goes through setting-up exercises, reads papers and letters before a brief Argentine breakfast at seven and receives people at home until about ten. He has been getting to his office at the Casa Rosada about 10:30, staying on until anywhere from eleven or midnight to almost dawn. At meetings and interviews, he does lots of listening to other people's opinions. They say he concentrates intensively on the job at hand to the exclusion of other things. For a solution to many of his problems, he has always—and still does—turned to books and tries to study things out for himself. Friends say he often thinks out loud, always asking reactions of people around him, especially his family. But he's deliberate and not hasty about making up his mind on important questions, of which Argentina today has plenty.

JUNE 13th

I have had this from so many sources that even though it can't be definitely checked, it would appear to be true. The story is that a small group of Army colonels plotted and executed the June 4th coup, and that these men are the real power behind the Ramírez Government. These colonels, who form a large and highly articulate group within Army officialdom, had been increasingly dissatisfied with the Castillo Administration. It was they, according to the story, who forced the show-down between Castillo and Ramírez and they who forced Rawson to resign his office, two days after taking over. Nobody is quite certain who the leading colonels are, but among the names mentioned are Juan Perón, whom Rawson appointed his chief of staff; Emilio Ramírez, who is not related to the President, and the two colonels who are in the Ramírez Cabinet, Alberto Gilbert

and fire-brandish Elbio Anaya. Colonels always wield special power in the Argentine Army because they have direct contact with the troops, and because Argentine soldiers have a strong feeling of personal loyalty to their immediate superiors, more so than to the military institution itself. In picking his Cabinet, Rawson apparently forgot nine colonels of the First and Second Divisions who had been the chief instruments and authors of the coup, and who had supported him and Ramírez. His selection of personal friends, including some who had been identified with Uriburu in the 1930 movement, made the colonels feel that they had been deliberately overlooked. They lost no time in telling him where to head off. It was grim, severe, hard-faced General Farrell, the commander of the revolting Second Division who, as representative of the colonels, finally ultimatumed Rawson that if he insisted on keeping the Cabinet he had formed, the troops and officers would immediately revolt against him. According to my dope, Rawson good-humoredly said: "One revolution is enough for me"; then he explained that he meant no harm, but simply wanted to help some old friends and stepped out.

The conspiring and planning within the Army has been going on for a long time, possibly for a year.

Last Thursday, there was a meeting of representatives of all anti-Castillo groups at Campo de Mayo, the headquarters of the First Division. Present were said to have been pro-Axis officers, isolationist officers, nationalist officers and pure democrats. The meeting, like the plotting that had gone on previously, was dominated by the well-knit group of energetic and ambitious Army colonels. The result, we are told, was a decision to revolt immediately.

JUNE 14th

The Government yesterday tossed out eight judges, including Dr. Miguel L. Jantus, who had been active in anti-Nazi activities. The official text of the firing order said that one of the motives of the revolutionary movement was that of "restoring to the judiciary powers that majesty and prestige necessary to the fulfilment of duty." The statement added: "Many judges were lacking in integrity and

equanimity—elementary conditions for a judge,” and went on to explain that they must “of necessity possess those virtues which make them worthy of fulfilling a trust.” The statement added: “Under the circumstances, and seeing that the Congress of the Nation has been dissolved, preventing any possibility of charges being laid before them, there is no reason why certain of these judges should remain in office.” Besides Jantus, those dismissed were Dr. Martin Abelenda, Dr. Enrique I. Caceres, Dr. A. Gonzalez Oliver, Dr. Fortunato A. Parera Deniz and Dr. Alberto H. Hernandez Cabral.

We can't find out very much about all of these gentlemen, but apparently some of them, at least, weren't overly energetic and the step seems to have been generally applauded.

The military dictatorship of General Franco is already beginning efforts to swing Argentina's new military Administration into the Hispanidad orbit and out of the Pan-American circle. Madrid is apparently doing the heavy work for Berlin and Rome, who seemingly fear that tipping their hand overmuch might not only cause unfavorable reaction but rebound and slap them right in the Axis. Franco, who, under the Castillo Government, had almost a free hand in Argentina, is finding his job particularly hard because the present Spanish Ambassador, ageing, pro-monarchist Admiral Antonio Magaz y Pers, the Marquis of Magaz (who is soon to be replaced by the younger, dynamic, Count of Bulnes) isn't too hot a Falangist salesman. Franco's line is that he is an Army man who is cleaning up corruption, suppressing communism and holding subversive elements in check plus re-establishing religion's place and morality. All this sounds pretty close to what Ramirez and his Government have been saying. Madrid, with the aid of its Falange, is trying to keep Argentina from breaking with the Axis, which would not only be a strong moral blow to Berlin but cut off Hitler's last open espionage, sabotage and propaganda link to the hemisphere. The new Falangist twist for Argentina is an anti-Soviet emphasis. *El Diario Español* is hammering on the theme that “even adversaries in war coincide on one point—condemnation of communism.” The Ramirez Government has openly and repeatedly stated its opposition to the U.S.S.R. Another strong point is the statement that the English are satisfied with Franco's “neutrality,” which, by inference, is slanted to mean London also thinks Argentina's neutrality O.K., even

though the United States feels otherwise. Trying to create the impression that London and Washington are not in agreement on the idea of Argentina's breaking with the dictators has long been one of the chief planks in the Nazi propaganda line for Latin America.

The Government is apparently concentrating a lot of its energy on cleaning up radio. Local broadcasts and the commercial communications companies are in a dither, trying to dope out what's going to happen next. The favorable effects of the decree prohibiting the use of all codes for the transmission of diplomatic cables or wireless messages abroad are dying down somewhat as more and more people begin to realize that it doesn't mean much. Radio, cable and telegraph lines to Hitler-occupied Europe are still available in Buenos Aires for anyone who wants to pay the toll. If, for example, some fifth columnist gets on the wire to the Wilhelmstrasse and merely says: "Willie is fine and is leaving next week," it may appear straight language to the censor while actually covering up vital shipping information. The only solution in the opinion of pro-democratic people here is the complete severance of all Axis communications which would amount to breaking relations.

The local broadcasting stations are having a more and more difficult time. One station has been closed down and three major broadcasting chains have been put on the hot seat as the result of the Government's new "clean-up-or-shut-up" program, Radio Mitre, it is reported, is to be closed down by Major Carlos II. Farias, Army Director de Radiocomunicaciones, because "persons other than those to whom the licence had been granted, were doing the operating." Farias has also issued a strongly worded decree warning stations that all programs must be officially okayed in advance and that no last-minute changes or switches are permitted. The order has already halted the retransmission of one speech by President Roosevelt and will probably ban others in the future, since it is obviously impossible to obtain in advance copies of what Roosevelt will say. Censoring the President of the United States is something! The military is particularly hot on cleaning up the literary standard of local radio. On Saturday, they issued a long series of banned slang words and expressions, continued use of which will involve severe penalties. Top comedienne Nini Marshall tonight dropped her character of *Catita* in the Martini Vermouth show on the Rades Chain, and simi-

lar steps are necessary on almost all stations. What a holler there would be in the States if Charlie McCarthy were banned as "not literary"! Spontaneous audience participation shows are also barred together with battle scenes, whistles, bugle calls and, in fact, any device considered "over-sensational." Stations have been advised to be ready to accept the spot official announcements originated by the State-Radio at all hours and, during the past few nights, the important 8:30 P.M. evening spot has been turned over to the Government for long appeals for improving the cultural standard of radio, since "radio's educational value is more important than the schools." Broadcasters are being rebuked over the way they have been handling previous rules about limiting the commercials between musical numbers. The majority of local stations get in as many as fifteen products in the hundred words they're allowed, and the announcers generally rattle off ads for liver ailments, perfumes, cooking oils, headache cures, etc., as one long, breathless sentence. Other stations bring in all sorts of screamers to "dramatize" the sales message. Any clean-up in this direction, at least, will win favor with listeners.

However, talk about "dictatorship in entertainment" is already being heard and ARGENTORES, the authors' society and SADIAC, the local ASCAP, are complaining that strict enforcement of the new rule would put them out of business. They insist that radio has done much for the public good. We hear that attempts are being made to try to explain all of this to the Government, but so far the stations have been unsuccessful in even arranging a meeting. As from today all newscasts must include an exactly equal proportion of local to foreign news. Local news must be read first, American news second, and foreign, that is to say war, news, must come last. This will have its effect—so broadcasters complain—on listener interest and public opinion.

JUNE 15th

Ramírez today received the press for the first time since he took over. The meeting was held in the long, rectangular Jardín de Invierno (Winter Garden) room of the Casa Rosada. Dressed in a

neat gray business suit (nowadays the President and the Cabinet members seem to be dividing their dress between mufti and khaki) Ramírez stood before the pencil-and-pad boys looking like a neat, pleasant, efficient bookkeeper reporting on the plans and the state of the nation. Slight and energetic, he appeared calm but determined to get the job done. He started out by explaining why the Army took over the Government. He emphasized social conditions; he said the military wanted to "find some solution to the sad plight of the people," particularly the working classes who, "weighed down by desperation caused by the impossibility of living, were the victims of the speculation of those lacking conscience." He said the Government also sought to provide a solution for a very grave problem—"a Constitution ruined by abuse." Ramírez affirmed that a Constitutional Government would eventually be established, that the military regime would not be perpetuated and that the Administration would remain in power only long enough for proper reconstruction.

All of this we industriously took down. Then one of the boys, with a little more nerve than the others, asked Ramírez if he was a democrat.

"What Argentina is, I am," he shot back.

It was a good line, which could be interpreted any way you chose, and I imagine will get quite a headline play. When inquiries were made along this line, Ramírez replied that he had taken his oath to defend the Constitution while standing under the bust of San Martín, and that he had sworn to follow in the footsteps of the Liberator. Thus, were he to circumscribe any part of the Constitution, he would be failing in loyalty to his hero.

Ramírez explained to us that he was only a soldier and that it was really the country which gave the order for the movement, adding: "Among the troops, I have been designated the first soldier. . . . I face the situation, shoulder to shoulder with my companions in arms, whose honor and mind I have solemnly pledged to the people. Their trust will not be misplaced."

Going modest on us, he said that the Casa Rosada was simply his new headquarters and that he intended to work and live the austere life of a soldier, skipping unnecessary functions because he did not believe in squandering public funds while the people were suffering.

Regarding foreign policy, the question we were most interested in, he simply repeated last week's theme of drawing closer to the sister republics and practicing Pan-Americanism, plus "proving our intentions by the eloquence of facts rather than rhetoric which we soldiers don't use or understand."

He said that the Government's program involved four steps: First, deposing the previous fraudulent Government (which they've done with relish); second, re-establishing order; third, clean up and reorganize the Administration completely; and fourth, "renew the national spirit or, in other words, deliver a healthy country to the legal arm which should govern. We are at the third step now," he said, adding that nine provinces or States had already been intervened. Most of the reporters had the feeling that Argentina's five other provinces are also likely to be taken over, thus eliminating all the Governors who had any connection with the Castillo Administration. Six of the nine new Interventors incidentally, are colonels, one is a general and two are naval captains.

Ramírez promised to turn back the country to "politicians, in the highest and purest concept of the word," when the reconstruction job is finished, but it was obvious to everybody that whatever political party or element takes over would have to continue the course set out by Ramírez. I'm beginning to hear talk about who might succeed the Military Government. Radical Leader Honorio Pueyrredón, immaculate and smartly dressed, has called on Ramírez twice during the past week. Before the coup his party was reported to have been working out a deal with Ramírez to have him act as their candidate. Ramírez himself, some insiders are saying, may want to stand for election and go back into office as a legally chosen candidate, as has happened in some other countries, particularly Paraguay. People are still talking about Rawson and some rather have a feeling that he is hurt at having been left out of the Cabinet and may want to force his way back.

JUNE 15th (*Later*)

Foreign Minister Storni just announced he is ready to sign a military-petroleum agreement with the United States. Argentina will begin

supplying the oil needs of Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil just as soon as he receives assurances that needed welling equipment will be expedited by Washington. This "horse-trade" idea has been up before, but Storni's latest announcement makes it look as if it might be pretty well set. Under the deal the States would make 36,000 tons of assorted mining machinery available to Argentina and in return Argentina will place 360,000 cubic meters of petroleum products at the disposal of the Petroleum Supply Committee for Latin America to be doled out to neighboring countries. Our chief advantage apparently would be that tankers now used to carry oil down to those countries co-operating in hemisphere defense could be diverted to other purposes. Similar negotiations were started by the Castillo Government last September but just dribbled along without much ever developing. If this attempt goes through, Argentina would probably take part in the oil and tanker pools now dividing the spoils for the hemisphere.

JUNE 16th

After last night's Cabinet meeting the Government issued a statement: Ramírez, the Vice-President and all members of the Cabinet will give up the privileges and salaries their new governmental offices entitled them to. They will accept only the pay-checks due them by virtue of their military rank. The amounts thus saved are to be collected in a special fund and devoted to *good works*. According to Army rates of pay, Ramírez as a general makes m/n 1900 pesos monthly, with expenses of 350 pesos more, that would be a total of \$562 a month. Vice-President Sueyro gets m/n 1600 pesos, plus 350 pesos, or \$487 a month. The ever-present colonels get m/n 1300 pesos each plus 300 pesos, or \$400 a month. This salary turn-down should be a popular move, but it is received with great skepticism. In Argentine Cabinet posts it isn't the actual salary that counts, even though Presidents don't do too well. (Dr. Roberto Ortiz—an immensely wealthy man when he took over the Presidency—left practically nothing. His sons have been forced to accept minor jobs in the Senate and elsewhere to keep going. Understand

that Ortiz spent all his money on politics. In spite of all the stories of pocket-filling under Justo's regime, the latter also left only a very small fortune on his death—much to everyone's surprise.)

At the Cabinet meeting, the Minister of Finance, Dr. Jorge Santamarina, announced there was no need for fear regarding the economic situation. He said measures would be taken to meet *certain exigencies*. Because of last summer's drought the Banco de la Nacion is to issue six million pesos in credits for harvesting and sowing. There's also to be a drive against administrative expenses of public works. It is revealed they've been as high as 83 percent in some cases. One 9,000-peso school building operation carried expenses of 18,000 pesos. For the time being no new public works will be authorized. Works in preliminary stages are to be discontinued; those well under way will be finished but confined to absolute necessities, thus plugging pork barrels.

The Government, apparently having given the people enough in the way of circuses, is now out to provide bread—at low prices. Tonight the Presidential Press Office gave out copies of a decree fixing the maximum prices that may be charged the public (as from June 23rd) for a number of articles of prime necessity. Most important, of course, is the ruling that Castillo's *decreto* authorizing the increase in the price of sugar has been canceled "in order to protect the public interest." Admitting it understood "certain things are taking place to bring about an increase in the cost of production, including the upping of wages to the cane cutters," the decree added that it had been found there was actually no evidence to support Castillo's price rise. Thus Patron Costas, who seems to have faded out of the picture, will get neither the Presidency nor his two millions.

Although Argentine food prices are low compared to those in the States and in many other countries, there have been increases in the past year. The public feels it has been paying through the nose, and the new prices ought to be popular.

Those in the know attribute all this interest in the well-being of the people of lesser means to the intervention of specific churchmen, who are very close to Ramírez, and guiding his every move. There has been some speculation as to the authorship of some of the new Government's early proclamations. These are now popularly

attributed to Ramírez' "Gray Eminence," an Army chaplain and intimate of Saba Sueyro's, one Father Wilkinson Dirube. I hear he is imbued with clerical-corporate-state doctrines, very much on the lines of those professed by Father Coughlin and by pocket Chancellor Dollfuss, of Austrian memory.

Father Wilkinson is said to be sitting in the Casa Rosada, ostensibly to assist in the drafting of public statements, but actually counseling and guiding Ramírez' every action. On the other hand, the pro-democratic Monseñor de Andrea is also supposed to have a hand in many of the wiser moves, and if anyone could have a really beneficial influence, he would. The most pernicious influence, however, is that of Monseñor Gustavo Franceschi. He, I understand, is behind the radio clean-up.

There is a great commotion among the numerous women employees in all Government offices. The new regime is evidently opposed to women in business or public life. Although they are allowed to retain their salaries and continue to work (the Government says it is anxious to insure employment for everyone) they are being eased out of positions of trust. The Castillo Administration had no objection to women, and Amadeo y Videla especially had such an eye for a pretty *senorita* that the Ministry of Agriculture had been achieving the proportions of a Billy Rose whoop-to on a gigantic scale. All these gals are being summarily cleaned out.

There is a great show of getting things done. The Council of Education for example: The Military Interventor arrived, summoned the board of a council. Once gathered together, he peremptorily demanded: "Which of you is Dr. So and So?" A voice replied: "I am." "Then you are to resign immediately, and in future remember that you should support your mistresses with your own earnings; there is no necessity or just reason why the country should support them."

There is also the story of two names figuring on the list of school teachers in one district. The *maestras* apparently had never presented themselves to take up their duties; they merely sent somebody to collect their salaries every month. They were summoned to appear the next day. "But the *niño* told us we wouldn't have any work to do, and we're far too busy at the house anyway; the house takes a lot of looking after," they said.

"The house? What house?"

"Dr. P's house, of course. We are the maids. The *niño* got us those teachers' jobs so that we should have pensions in our old age."

JUNE 17th

Some of the picture-magazine men who have been working at the Casa Rosada tell me that Ramírez and the other Cabinet members are pleasant for the most part. They seem modest and unused to pictures and publicity and keep insisting they are "merely soldiers and sailors trying to straighten things out." They *seem* to be running the Government with smooth, military efficiency and that there is less of the stuffiness and fussiness of Castillo's Cabinet of *doctores*. Most of them appear friendly, trusting and well disposed toward the United States, especially the Vice-President, Sueyro, who has been to the States on various missions. He is full of little dry witticisms, speaks English well, and tells about his friends Admirals Spier and Nimitz, and how he knows Admiral Ingram. Although Sueyro agrees that he was the home-town boy with Ramírez, he points out that he is many years younger, and can't exactly be classed as a playmate. Many people think Sueyro and his brother will be an influence for better relations with the United States and for breaking with the Axis.

Despite the insistence that they are simply a Provisional Government which got rid of Castillo in order to restore order and efficiency, Ramírez and his entire family have moved from their modest little apartment into the elegant Presidential mansion on Calle Suipacha. The way Senora Ramírez has given orders to the decorators to do things over makes some of the boys think that the Military intends to stick for a while, or at least for the duration of the war.

I note an increasing trend of opinion, partly as a result of the measures announced yesterday, that the Army leaders will be better than Castillo, so far as internal policy is concerned. Old-timers here say that nowhere is the new-broom-sweeps-clean theory more true than in Argentina. Thus, even if the Military intends to line its own pockets as did Castillo's gang, it will take a while to get to that

point. The public still skeptically forecasts: "*Ya se acomodaran ellos también.*" (They'll soon get their thumbs in the pie.)

JUNE 18th

I've got the glooms again, and not all the optimists I've talked to today can make me feel better. The appointment of a known 100 percent Nazi Argentine General to the important Mayoralty of the capital city of Buenos Aires, the suspension of several leading anti-Axis newspapers and three radio stations—following the imposition of the strictest Berlin-patterned supervision over all broadcasting—plus other moves during the past week, have also cast a shadow of despondency over many pro-democratic Argentines, despite the Military Government's deeds-not-words promises of closer Pan-American co-operation.

The Buenos Aires newspapers haven't said a word about the fact that General Basilio B. Pertiné—who took over as Mayor the day before yesterday—has been for years one of the top directors of almost a half dozen German firms, blacklisted by the United States, like the giant electrical trust, Siemens-Schuckert. Pertiné is not only frankly pro-German, but a leader of the Naziphile elements in Army circles. It's no secret that the naming of the sixty-four-year-old Pertiné, who studied in Germany and later served as military attaché in Berlin, indicates that Ramírez doesn't intend any really strong measures against Axis fifth columnists still working in Argentina, let alone an immediate outright diplomatic break with Berlin, Rome and Tokyo. Because big, cosmopolitan Buenos Aires is the heart and soul of Argentina, the post of *Intendente* or Mayor is one of the strongest. It isn't merely a straight administrative job, either, since the Mayor of Buenos Aires decides what political parties can or can't hold meetings in the capital, what pro-democratic or other movies can or can't be shown, and, working in conjunction with the powerful police force, exercises an indirect control over newspapers, labor unions, etc. The legion of municipal employees who must toe the line are another powerful factor, and the *Intendente's* finger gets into even such unusual activities as the control

of the Colon Opera. Pertiné retired from the active list in 1935, after forty-eight years' service, and the Nazis, remembering him as military attaché in Berlin, made him a director of many of their leading firms here.

A clear test hasn't yet occurred, but it can be noted that the outright Nazi papers, like the blatant *Pampero* and *Cabildo*, and other swastika rags including *Momento Argentino* and the German language *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* are carrying on with hardly a sail drawn. The pro-Soviet *La Hora*, suspended in the first days of the coup, has remained shuttered. Even more indicative than *La Hora* was the suspension last night of *Los Andes* of the provincial capital of Mendoza. It was simply stated that the measure was taken because the paper printed an editorial criticizing the appointment of a member of the Provincial Education Department by the Military Interventor. Actually *Los Andes*, always as fiercely independent in its own sphere as *La Prensa* here in Buenos Aires, is undoubtedly considered a potential thorn in the side of the military regime.

Arrests of alleged communists in the interior are now starting. It is announced officially that Dr. Rudecindo Martinez, Professor of International and Public Law at the Universidad del Litoral of Parana in Entre Rios, has been picked up as a suspected communist. A group of outstanding public citizens has petitioned the Interventor, J. C. Sanguinetti, to liberate him. The Red bogey has never been worked better than here.

Baron Shu Tomii, Japanese Ambassador and Signor Livio Garbaccio, the Italian Chargé d'Affaires, called on Foreign Minister Storni yesterday to protest the ban on their use of code messages. Later Storni told us he had advised them of the Government's decision to adhere to the decree in all its aspects. No other anti-Axis steps have been taken so far, however.

This from a story for a United States newspaperman's publication: If the overthrow of the Castillo Government has proven one thing, it is that a free people must have free newspapers, or something is bound to burst somewhere. I think that conclusion is one that can be safely ventured now that some of the *flash* and *urgent* filing days are past. The point which is, I think, likely to be overlooked by United States readers and by United States newspapermen, in particular, is that it was Castillo's suppression of free speech and

other constitutional rights, by imposition of a state of siege that hid from the public the facts that should have been widely publicized a long time ago. Everybody here knew something about the scandals which the Military now say it will wipe off Argentina's slate. But even the biggest newspapers, such as the world-famed *Prensa* and *Nacion* had been prevented from saying even a little about what was really going on under the surface. Castillo's explanation, which nobody took seriously, was that the people would be stung to violent action if partisan newspapers were allowed to continue without restrictions. Therefore the privilege of commenting on Governmental policy would have to be suspended for the duration. Actually the state of siege served to bind and tape any criticism of any Government policy or officer. Local newspapers which dared to flout the rules were slapped down hard. Suspensions were frequent. Foreign correspondents who tried to get cables out explaining the true facts also found the going difficult. Still the dirty work behind the scenes was going on, annoying the Army and the people, while the Castillo Government continued its ostrich position. Every newspaperman here was wise to the scandals. But they talked about them only in private. If the papers had enjoyed the freedom to expose these things, the military mop-up would never have been necessary. Many think that if the newspapers had adopted a united stand in protest against the Castillo oppression, they would have won the battle for the country.

Some probes, it is true, were started by the last devitalized Congress, but even when the Congressmen were able to expose flagrant extremes, as in the case of the Taborda Committee investigating anti-Argentine activities, they never got anywhere against the Castillo-controlled Senate and a gagged press and radio. The new Government hasn't loosened up press restrictions either, and, while it insists that it is only an "emergency condition," the length of the emergency and whether or not the Administration will permit the press to report what it sees and hears, is another question. The increasing flow of official handouts has many of the newspapermen worried and most of the papers are sticking pretty close to these official announcements. "Observers" have been placed in all newspaper offices, to suggest to editors what size type they may or may not use for each headline, and generally dictating policy.

Surprising hardly anybody, the Government, in a decree signed by Ramírez and Minister of the Interior Gilbert, today called off next September's Presidential elections. The official notification said that elections would not be held "until such time as the objectives of the military revolution have been carried out." They also ordered that preparation of voting lists and the electoral registers, which in certain parts of the country are already in the hands of the printers, be suspended "as their completion will now serve no useful purpose." The State authorities are instructed to come to some arrangement with the printers to cover the cost of the work already done. Although nothing was said officially, apparently this means the people are not to do too much talking about the possibility of future elections.

No one, of course, knows how much time the military will require to complete what it considers its inspired program for hoisting the country out of the mire. One indication that it won't be brief is the fact that the word "provisional" in referring to the Military Administration is banned from today henceforth. Until now, the term has been used not only in statements but in all public decrees and documents. The Government says that since it has been recognized by the Supreme Court, it is a legal Government. They'll be running out of Dutch Cleanser soon if this clean up continues. So far Congress has been dissolved, all provincial Governors, most of whom are charged with having been elected by fraud, removed, and the heads of the National Lottery, the National Council of Education, the State Merchant Fleet, and the Y.P.F. state oil monopoly, liquidated. Clean-up vacancies created in many of these bureaus will not be filled. The only ones that will be replaced are those in technical jobs necessary for the public welfare.

How many public employees are going? *La Prensa* stated the other day that at least 12,000 superfluous workers can be eliminated immediately. True, the Government has become top-heavy with all kinds of added employees. One story around town is that if you had an uncle in a certain bureau all the nephews got jobs. The Ministry of Justice and Education has been particularly heavy with this kind of "recommended" job-holder. The Administration

says that from now on recommendations will in themselves be sufficient reason for rejecting any new job seekers.

Yesterday the new Interventor de Radiocomunicaciones, Major Farias, launched another long diatribe against the radio stations. It read like a summary of all *Pampero's* frequent attacks. Major Farias insists everything accomplished in Argentine radio so far is disgraceful and shameful and must be entirely wiped out. He quoted a story of a mother who asked a Greek philosopher how soon she should begin her child's education. "How old is your child?" he asked her. She replied: "Two years old." "Then it is already late, madam. You have lost two years." The identical thing has happened in Argentine radio, according to Farias. The last twenty years have been time wasted. So much was said about the *uncultured* language used in radio, that some carping critics proceeded to examine Farias' oration, marking on it all the grammatical and other errors they professed to find. If Farias' precepts are to be followed, they say, no station could ever broadcast either *Martin Fierro*, José Hernandez' great *gaucho* poetical work, or Shakespeare's plays. They are full of slang.

JUNE 20th

I understand that despite the strongest opposition from the United States meat industry, plans are under way here and in Washington to open the hitherto tightly closed United States market to low-priced Argentine beef. If they work out, folks in the States are going to have a treat. The proposals are being developed for two basic reasons. The first is economic: The present critical, war-born United States meat shortage and Argentina's vast, practically untapped supply of what she claims is the world's best meat. The second is political—the fact that if Uncle Sam opens the door to Argentine meat, a door long barred on the grounds that the *pampa* cattle are carriers of hoof-and-mouth disease, Argentina may, in return, drop her old belief that it is still possible to do business with Hitler, and sever the last vital swastika link to this hemisphere. Mixing meat with the gravy of diplomacy and handing out one-way tickets to the

Berlin, Rome and Tokyo diplomats in return for a hefty beef contract may seem far fetched to some *norteamericanos*. But to those who know Argentina's meat complex, who know that meat is the No. 1 industry, the No. 1 export item and top wealth producer, it is not at all strange. Meat is king here. Although Argentina was conspicuously absent from the Hot Springs United Nations Food Conference, United States government experts have already foreseen an emergency demand for Argentine food products, especially meat, if the United Nations are to regain the Axis-held land of Europe. That will be even truer if United States crops suffer damages from drought in some places and abnormal rains elsewhere. Argentina felt like the kid with the catcher's mitt who isn't asked to get in the game, when she was left out of the Hot Springs Conference, considering her importance as a world supplier. People believed that even though the Castillo Government and especially reactionary Foreign Minister Ruiz Guiñazú tried to make light of the matter, the *estancieros* and Army leaders realized once again the country would get nowhere so long as the neutrality-clinging Administration remained in power. Many people here and in Washington think Ramírez is much more willing to listen to reason. They say that if, in addition to admitting meat into the United States, some plan is worked out to give Argentina a share in the sale and shipment of foodstuffs to populations in recovered areas, it wouldn't be long before the severance of Axis relations was accomplished. And with it would come the halting of Axis espionage, sabotage and propagandizing.

The United States meat industry, I understand, isn't overly keen about serving as a lever to roll Argentina into the hemisphere solidarity sphere. Still, recent widely played press dispatches from Washington say that even some die-hard Western Senators admit the possibility of importation of Argentine meat despite their to-the-death opposition. And this has given credence to reports that the door might be pushed back just a little bit. For some time, the United States, in a three-way arrangement, has been Lend-Lease buying Argentine, Uruguayan and Brazilian meat for Great Britain. Some of this has been eaten and relished by United States troops in England—evidence to local minds that Argentine meat is not dangerous for *yanquis*, as claimed by some of those opposing importa-

tion. The local meat-packing *frigoríficos*, including Swift de La Plata, Wilson and Armour, have already offered their complete cooperation with the Ramírez Government and, although none have put themselves on record, I understand that they would have no other course than to go along with any scheme favored by the Military Administration. Thus, if the Argentine made any arrangements with the United States, it would find no outstanding opposition here. There is still a question of how much Argentine beef might be available for export to the United States if the door were opened. Local authorities have claimed that 4,000 tons of beef and an even greater amount of mutton would be available monthly right off the bat. My check-up gives a somewhat different story. The meat packers to whom I've talked say that every bit of meat presently available is already being sold to hungry England and that if more were available, England would, and could, use it. Government authorities, however, insist this is the bunk and assert the "Chicago Meat Lobby" has always kept their product out on the "obviously false and discriminatory grounds of disease, while the real reason has been to protect their industry at the expense of the American people."

JUNE 21st

Quiet but firm opposition from military officialdom in almost a dozen Latin-American capitals has killed off any possibility of successful formation of a Latin-American Expeditionary Force such as proposed to the United States War Department by the Latin-American Council of the Free World Association. There's been no definite turn-down, but there rarely is in Latin America. Not many Good Neighbor leaders, some of whom talk a better hemisphere solidarity than they are willing to act, are likely to venture outright opposition to the plan for tapping the vast reservoir of military manpower available south of the border. But for all practical purposes, the people to whom I've gone in response to a story query from New York are convinced the idea is dead.

The English-language newspaper, *The Standard* (which incidentally is the oldest newspaper in the Argentine) failed to appear on the newsstands today. Checking into the case certainly reveals a strange story. *The Standard* was founded as a weekly by whiskered Michael Mulhall and his younger mustachioed brother, Edward, on May 1, 1861; it has never missed a deadline until today. Now it seems that last February 20th they carried an editorial titled "An Appeal from Cowards" which gave the works to Hitler's propaganda maestro, Herr Doktor Goebbels, for a speech in which the Doc said Germany was the world's only defense against bolshevism. As usual, shortly after the editorial appeared, the Foreign Office received a routine complaint from the Nazi Embassy and went through the normal business of filing a charge with the police. The cops either conveniently forgot it or what seems more likely, now, never quite got down that far in the pile of things to do. So in comes the new Government whose watchwords are "speed" and "efficiency." When Police Chief Colonel Emilio Ramírez took over, he ordered all business on the dockets to be cleaned up at once. He and his men started doing things fast. They ran across the complaint about *The Standard* and discovered a suspension had been ordered but never applied; so they rushed around to *The Standard* office and told chunky, peppery night-editor W. A. Ryan to discontinue getting out the edition. Ryan didn't waste any time getting in touch with the British Embassy. They in turn reached the Foreign Office and the Ministry of the Interior. A few hours later the Presidential Press Office said that everything was O.K. and that the paper could come out. But the Chief of Police could not be found and the cops wouldn't take orders from any of the ministries. Before the order could finally be reinstated, it was past bedtime for *The Standard*, and the 28,271st issue missed. The story seems comic-opera, but none of this version is to be allowed publication locally. Most people, not being on the inside, are surprised that an English-language newspaper was the first to be singled out by the Military for the initial show of severity of this sort.

JUNE 23rd

The police announced today the general prohibition of meetings of political parties or other organizations "which have political aims affecting either domestic or foreign policy." The Radicals and socialists who recently applied for permission to hold meetings have had their applications turned down. This measure is even more severe than that imposed by the Castillo Administration, which allowed some meetings. What's next?

JUNE 24th

A query from New York started me on a check-up of the present status of Axis activities in Argentina as of today. This is from my cable:

Axis espionage, sabotage and propaganda activities are still operating full blast in Argentina. Buenos Aires remains open G.H.Q. for Nazi-German, Fascist-Italian, Spanish-Falangist and Japanese fifth columning in this hemisphere. And there appears no indication that the new Military Government, which three weeks ago today kicked out Castillo, intends to really do anything about it. Highly reliable diplomatic sources tell me the new Government has been given copies of all the Axis-curbng proposals developed by Argentina's own dissolved Congressional Committee probing Axis affairs. They've also had the advice of the Emergency Committee for the Political Defense of the Continent. Yet the Government, which has found time to tackle hundreds of other problems and even issue a special revolutionary commemorative postage stamp, has given but one sign of recognition—a face-slapping statement last night by Minister of War Farrell that allegations made by the Congressional Committee last January against "distinguished," allegedly pro-totalitarian Army officers, were untrue. The inference taken here is that any such remarks affecting the "name of honor" of officers, would lead to stronger action.

Another sign regarded as significant is that the powerful Buenos Aires police, while not too busy to suspend the Buenos Aires *Standard* for an article published last February, doesn't have time to do

anything about Axis activities which the Political Defense Committee just five months ago said was responsible for the loss of "millions of dollars' worth of United States ships and supplies—as well as the lives of hundreds of passengers when their ships were torpedoed." Although these Axis activities affect every country of this hemisphere and especially the United States, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay, not even a stooge committee such as named by Castillo has been proposed. Neither have there been any follow-ups to the prosecution of spies whom Castillo was forced to nab, following the issuance of Washington's finger-pointing memoranda.

The extent of Axis activities in Argentina as of this afternoon is hard for anyone who has not actually seen it for himself to understand. The Axis still operates twenty-four hours a day from Argentina and those gents who ducked under cover when the Government shifted apparently feel the coast is now clear. Top of the heap is Dr. Otto Meynen, Chargé d'Affaires of the big bustling Nazi Embassy offices located in the Banco Germanico on Calle Leandro Alem just a block from the back entrance to the Casa Rosada. Meynen has been in charge since the departure of Ambassador Von Thermann. Although some of the better-known characters like one-time Naval Attaché Gerhard Niebuhr and the Cultural Attaché Metzger have gone back to the Wilhelmstrasse, the swastika-flaunting headquarters is as active as ever. There is little official business, but the staff is as large and apparently well-beeled as in the first days of the war. Behind the well-guarded doors, and safe from pro-democratic prying, hundreds of employees are busy. The Japanese Embassy is similarly active; the Italians are less so. Espionage activities, which the United States so carefully documented for the Castillo Government some months ago, are perhaps somewhat curtailed, but still carry on in much the same fashion. The system is a beautifully organized arrangement of separate cells or watertight compartments. There are at least four of these groups in operation. Most of the agents don't even know the names of the others working in their team and certainly not those in other groups. By this means, the German Embassy, where all information is concentrated, can check the news gleaned by one bunch against that turned in by another, and ascertain its accuracy before transmitting to Germany. The arrest or confession of one or more agents can't jeopardize

the operation of the system as a whole. Movements of British, United States and other allied merchantmen are watched and every effort is made to pass along data that will be helpful for Nazi U-boats. As in the past, exports and imports are also eyed, and information on United States armament industry, on military preparedness and on meteorological and other developments is coordinated and forwarded.

Cables to Hitler-occupied Europe are accepted by Transradio,* an American-controlled company which explains that it cannot refuse messages which conform to local regulations, since it operates as a public utility and must handle all comers. Italcable, with its ornamental office on Calle San Martin a block away, has even fewer scruples and its lines are always operating. Telephone calls, in German if you wish, are handled locally by the American-owned Union Telefonica which gives the same public-utility explanation as Transradio. Axis news agencies, barred from every other country of the hemisphere, also keep up a round-the-clock service and serve not only to spread propaganda but as effective eyes and ears for Berlin. Transocean (not to be confused again with Transradio), Domei and Stefani, plus the Spanish Prensa Mundial, keep big staffs. As press services, they have a "legitimate" reason for a heavy cross-Atlantic file, into which they can pack a lot more information than any Goebbels-controlled daily will print.

Besides the news services, Axis papers, unlike pro-democratic Argentine dailies, have suffered few interruptions. *Pampero* adopted the military coup as its own baby from the first day, and has been padding its "patriotism" with anti-democratic poison since. Practically given away to newsboys, who therefore hawk it ahead of other papers, *Pampero* is still printed by the blacklisted *Editorial Argentina*, whose owner, Dr. José Maria Rosa, was a member of General Rawson's short-lived Cabinet. Besides other newspapers, Axis-tainted books and magazines, many of them low-priced and well-illustrated editions issued by blacklisted *editoriales*, are rolling from the press and freely sold or given away. Cinemas, like the blacklisted Astoria, Cineac and Alvear, screen Ufa German and Luce Italian reels with few of the censorship difficulties experienced

* The Argentine Transradio is not connected with the American company of the same name.

by many anti-dictator Hollywood pictures. Getting their stuff through the British blockade is generally accomplished by smuggling films on Spanish and Portuguese boats. The Axis does comparatively little direct radio propagandizing because most stations fear black-listing if they try anything off-color. The blacklisted Radio Prieto in Buenos Aires is the leading Axis mouthpiece.

It is via the German and Italian banks, however, that the Axis wields its greatest influence here. The powerful Banco Aleman Transatlantico and the Banco Germanico de la America del Sud, among others, continue normal business activities without one peso being blocked by Argentina. It's been estimated that the military conquest in Europe brought Berlin control of an equivalent of 445,000,000 United States dollars of business and industry in Argentina. The German Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations are used as one more tool in the Nazi political set-up. It no longer openly collects funds for the *Winterhilfe*, but its support to the swastika has by no means diminished. Business houses like Siemens-Schuckert, on whose Board sits General Pertiné, the new military Mayor of Buenos Aires, are also powerful. Unlike the *Union Alemana de Gremios* and other so-called trade and cultural cover-up organizations, it has never really been probed. Speaking of organizations, the Nazis in Argentina are swinging more and more to undercover aid of nationalist groups to carry their neutrality banner and sell other angles of the Berlin line since these groups stand less chance of effective dissolution than outright German entities.

Many here feel that the only way the Ramírez Government will be persuaded that action against the Nazis is necessary is if Washington cracks down and not only holds back much-sought arms and ammunition, but adopts an even stronger attitude on sales and purchases. Argentina needs United States support, is an opinion you hear everywhere. But not until a firm hand is shown will the military drop its policy of "Pan-American solidarity—but at the same time no bad feelings against the Axis."

JUNE 25th

The announcement from Washington that the Argentine Government has offered its full collaboration to the Inter-American Defense

Board has set me to thinking about the Argentine Army itself. It isn't easy to generalize about armies, any more than it is easy to generalize about people. Still, trying to dope out the character and the personality of this particular Army is especially interesting now because by understanding the Army it may be possible to determine where they are heading and whether or not they are likely to get there. Argentina's Army is not like our Army or Britain's Army. Not since the war with Paraguay, back around the time of our Civil War, has Argentina's Army ever engaged in a war—major or minor. Nevertheless it has always been a powerful factor in Argentine life, like the armies of many another Latin-American Republic, and in a sense like the armies of some European states. It has always considered itself the stabilizing force in Argentina. A conscript, not a standing Army with professional career officers, its size varies; average: around 50,000 active soldiers, who generally serve a year or more—and about 3,000 officers. Down here it's the officers who matter, and, of the officers, the young colonels who dominate the generals.

This is a disciplined Army and it is the discipline of the old Prussian school. It is a spit-and-polish Army, a proud Army, an Army that believes its function is to preserve national honor, not only on the battlefield, but internally and in its relations with other nations, especially other Latin-American nations. It is an Army whose infantry marches well and which puts on a good show for the *viva*-shouting public. What kind of show it would put on under shell-fire is another question. That would of course depend on the adversary. It might be a close neighbor, like Chile or Uruguay, whose size and equipment are not so hot, or a far more powerful neighbor like Brazil. And here the question, as many *militares* have recently come to realize, would be one of equipment as much as men.

Argentina's Army has always had a strong German influence. Which doesn't mean that the Germans have run it, although they have inspired its military precepts, and (it's becoming increasingly apparent now) its ideologies. For almost twenty-five years a German military mission of six officers under the direction of the late General W. J. Kretchnar was under contract to train the Argentine Army. On his death, Colonel General Nietenfuehr took over, and, when Nietenfuehr's term expired, Hitler, with characteristic Nazi bad manners, dispatched Nietenfuehr as Military Attaché to Brazil, and

another member of the mission to Chile in the same capacity. The war plans of the Argentine general staff—which the mission undoubtedly knew—underwent very considerable revision thereafter.

The goose-step, the uniform and, most of all, the heel-clicking Prussian dogma of implicit obedience were retained and are still the dominating force. This quarter of a century influence on the highly intelligent upper cadre of the Argentine Army is still very apparent. Officers sent from Germany after the Hitler regime took over, whether they belonged to the infantry, the artillery, cavalry or air corps, were always the most representative exponents of totalitarian philosophy. The Germans always worked on the young students of the crack military college and were most successful with the group who are now the colonels. The Army has never been a rich man's career in Argentina. Students at the military college have generally been from ambitious middle-class families, although there are sprinklings of *estancia*-owning society boys. Look over the names and the ancestries of those who run the Army today and you'll find Italian, Spanish, German, British, with the Italian predominating. Officers are drilled to look stern and to keep a poker face in the presence of their superiors. They are indoctrinated with a pride in their profession and its importance in the Argentine scheme of things. They are fanatically patriotic, strongly nationalist, and although it might be hard to find outright Quislings in their ranks, the rigidity of the Army mind has found in totalitarianism a congeniality that it cannot discover in democracy. The Colegio Militar apparently instils something in those who go through it. Argentine professional officers look down on reserve officers and even more on the conscripts in a manner inconceivable in the States. This is all the more extraordinary, considering that often the conscripts and the reservists come from the very same strata of families and backgrounds as the professionals, and any youth who is able to raise the necessary three to five thousand pesos for fees, uniforms and so on and who can pass the severe physical and intellectual exams, doesn't have too much trouble getting in to wear the highly prized cadet's uniform with its smart white jacket and cap. Perhaps the difference is that the conscript, fresh from private life, thinks and feels with and of the people, while the professionals move more and more away into their own way of thinking.

There are many good brains in Argentina's Army, and concentration at the war college is on campaigns, both ancient and modern. In a strict sense, the Army has never intervened in politics, except when—as in 1930—and previously, it considered the country's affairs in such a state that it “had to take matters in its own hands.” Army officialdom has always kept a close eye on what has gone on in the national scene and especially what was happening to its appropriations in Congress. Up until the outbreak of the present war, military expenditures were pretty well held to a minimum. Alarmed by the crushing advance of Nazi blitz, quick action was taken in 1940 when pro-democratic Ortiz was still President. A five-year armament plan was proposed, calling for the expenditure of close to a billion and a half pesos (about \$65,000,000). No figures are known, but I've had officers admit the full scheme was never carried out because the arms Argentina wanted couldn't be bought and Argentina refused to take those steps which Uncle Sam insisted she must take as a requirement for Lend-Lease. Before the war, Argentina, like most South American countries, maintained an Army purchasing commission in Europe. As the war progressed the mission moved from France to Italy, but Europe soon became too occupied with using her own armaments and the mission moved to the States. The Mission is still up there and the military hope that business will be picking up.

Colonel Charles Deerwester heads our three-man aviation mission which has been down here for the past three years, giving training to qualified pilots in tactics and celestial navigation. Otherwise our influence in Argentina's Army has not been particularly strong, although our Military Attaché, Colonel John W. Lang, is well respected. In recent months Army bases which formerly showed all kinds of Nazi movies have allowed some American films to be shown.

At present the Army consists of six *agrupaciones* of infantry, three of cavalry and one partly motorized division, the sixth, that has as its major component twelve Vickers light tanks. As service weapons the Army has a Mauser 7.65 rifle, bought in Belgium, and Colt machine guns. In the last few years the Army has bought a considerable number of Thompson sub-machine guns—how many nobody knows—and manufactures what I am told are very serviceable automatic weapons locally. There's one battalion of eight AA .75's, some

horse-drawn heavy artillery (one battery of 155 Howitzers and another battery of 155 Longs). These make a good show at military parades, but Argentina's chief defense problem cannot be understood by watching parades. The mountain detachments which protect the long Andean frontier with Chile, are said to be good and efficient. But Argentina has never in her history battled with Chile. She has a tremendous exposed coastline, whose many harbors are poorly protected in the way of fixed defenses because of the remoteness of a possible invasion. The air corps has been receiving special attention of late, but its strength is still said to be less than 200 fighting planes and about fifty bombers. The minimum requirements, according to Argentina military authorities, are at least 300 fighting planes and 100 bombers.

Argentina has always had universal compulsory military and naval service. Boys are required to register at the age of eighteen and two years later their class is called up. Names are drawn by lot and there are few exemptions—oldest sons of widowed mothers, those physically disabled, etc. Students can take a special marksmanship course which cuts their period of service to six months, and Federal shooting fields all over the country are available for those who wish to practice, much in the same way as our R.O.T.C. boys train. Physical requirements are very stringent. As a result, in some distant provinces, such as Jujuy and Catamarca, as many as 70 percent have to be rejected for physical disabilities. Conscripts who have shown exceptional military ability are drafted into the Officers' Reserve, and descendants of patrician families are automatically posted to the famous regiments which date back to Independence days.

One thing this new military Administration has shown is that the colonels are much more powerful than the generals, and the colonels are among the most fanatic of the authoritarian-minded nationalists within the Army. The colonel's power stems in part from the Argentine characteristic of personal loyalty rather than loyalty to a cause or an ideal. For most of the conscripts the colonels are the only officers they personally know. Young, ambitious, more willing to take a chance, the colonels—who don't care to reason about their might-is-right philosophy—are running the show today, and they're precisely the group most dangerous to our ideas of democracy.

JUNE 26th

Some random notes:

Enrique Ruiz Guiñazú, Jr., son of the former Foreign Minister and a strong nationalist, has been named temporary Chief of the Information Division of the Ministry in which his father served. Hasn't attracted much attention, but those who know inner workings here say it's pretty certain a son of the chief advocate of Argentine neutrality would not be named to an official post if the Government really intended to break relations with the Axis.

Carl Spaeth, United States delegate to the Emergency Advisory Committee for the Political Defense of the Hemisphere, has been here for a series of conferences with Argentine officials regarding enforcement of anti-Axis measures agreed upon at the Rio Conference in January, '42. Don't know how he's made out, but apparently he has tried to cite some important steps which the Argentine Government could take to control the Axis fifth column short of actually breaking relations.

Colonel Carlos Wirth, close to Ramírez, we understand, is being sent to the States on a special mission, obviously in regard to obtaining arms. Colonel Wirth is apparently to stress that Argentina wants to buy arms—not Lend-Lease them. I don't think Washington will trust any planes, guns and tanks to Argentine hands under present circumstances. It's like slipping the baby a loaded revolver.

Castillo called at the Finance Ministry today to see about his three-thousand-peso-monthly pension. Question whether it will be granted him is still undecided. Nobody loves Castillo any more.

The papers are starting to print friendly cartoons about the Government's clean-up program. One showed the long-time Buenos Aires provincial political boss, Alberto Barcelo, with suitcase packed, making a quick exit. Lieutenant Colonel Miguel Robles has been named Interventor of Barcelo's important home district of Avellaneda.

JUNE 27th

Clarínada, as furiously pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic as it ever was during the Castillo days, yesterday made its first appearance since the

new Military Government took over. The official ads are missing, but there is plenty of evidence in the hate-filled articles and venom-packed drawings to show that *Clarínada's* Axis policy apparently still enjoys as strong a presidential blessing as ever. A full color drawing of Ramírez replaces the usual Jew-baiting cover, but the inside pages are crammed with articles explaining how the June 4th coup was staged to force out "Jewish communist legions trying to control our country." There is a violent cartoon showing a fang-toothed caricature marked with the Jewish star and signed "Mateo Jacoibus" (kill the Jews), captioned: "Every pig must be made to give up his fat profits."

Others equally bitter depict the same figure bowing to the Argentine military, while holding a long blood-stained dagger ready to make the plunge. Paragraphs quote at length from Ramírez' speeches (which to date have contained few favorable references to democracy) to "prove" how the new Government is "destroying international foreign Jewish vampires controlling the Argentine press and wiping out the depraved Jews controlling Argentina radio."

Clarínada isn't by any means an official publication, but the very fact that it is distributed through the mails at special rates, when so many other papers are being closed, is significant. It is also interesting how many of the planks of *Clarínada's* platform have been put into effect during the past couple of weeks. For instance:

A large number of alleged communists and liberals have been arrested by the Federal Capital Police Chief, Colonel Emilio Ramírez, who receives high praise from *Clarínada*. Many of these prisoners are being "exiled," as demanded by the sheet, to Ushuaia in remote Tierra del Fuego, Argentina's Siberia.

The Junta de la Victoria, which has sent vast quantities of blankets and other items to Soviet Russia, as well as to Britain and China, while not outrightly banned, has been practically closed, and members have been kept out of the various branches by police guards.

The Comision Sanitaria para la Ayuda de los Pueblos Libres (Sanitary Commission to Aid the Peoples Fighting for Freedom), which recently collected five million pesos for the heroes of Stalin-grad, has also been disbanded, as advocated by *Clarínada*, which insists communists and Jews are synonymous. Both organizations are held by the Government to be communist dangers, although this is

vigorously denied. Apparently the very fact that they are pro-Russia is sufficient.

JUNE 28th

The Government is intensifying its drive against so-called international organizations. Now the Free Masons are ordered closed. I haven't yet been able to pick up the full story, but the move seems to be directed principally against counter-revolutionary possibilities. The Government apparently feels Masonic organizations have provided secret protection for conspirators in South American countries. Vargas, early in his career, also closed up the Masonic lodges in Brazil "as a protective measure." Another version here is that since the military are strongly Roman Catholic, Ramírez' clerical advisers influenced him to act.

JUNE 29th

Rules on radio are getting tougher. There is a special drive on against dramatic soap-opera serials. All shows now on the air must end on July 15th; future scripts must be censored at least ten days prior to the opening of the show. No jived-up versions of classical music will be permitted. Foreign musicians cannot speak on the air. (Having visiting personalities like Bing Crosby and Douglas Fairbanks mumble a few words in Spanish has always been a favored broadcasting stunt here, and has usually been regarded as *simpatico*; their accents are apparently getting under the Government's skin.) Emphasis, stations have been told, should be on native folklore. Orchestras should be made up with the greatest percentage possible of local musicians. The young, boorish and extremely provincial, narrow-minded Director de Radiocomunicaciones, known to the Army as *el loco Farias* (crazy Farias), seems to have been chosen for his post because he is the Army's code expert! He has stated that he sees no reason why stations should import foreign talent. It was

pointed out to him that in the case of, say, a great violinist like Menuhin, or a singer like Marian Anderson, it wasn't the artist's nationality that mattered, but the fact that genius is beyond price and should be available to all nations. He replied brusquely that he didn't see things that way, and that Argentina had sufficient talent of her own, there being no need to seek it elsewhere.

JULY 1st

This from a specially ordered magazine article:

What is the real meaning of Argentina's revolution? Does the change in Government really signify anything? Have the United Nations or the totalitarians gained? I cannot give positive answers to all these questions. No one can. All the inside stuff may be wrong by the time it gets into print. But here are some answers and considered judgments, plus some predictions for what they are worth. First it must be kept in mind that the jockeying period is still on. You can feel that tension, that we-are-being-watched attitude as you talk both on and off the record to the new and somewhat bewildered military Ministers and their subordinates. You note it as you study the machine-gun-like tone of the new Press Bureau's communiqués handed the bidou-playing reporters in the high-ceilinged *sala de periodistas* in the Casa Rosada. You feel everywhere that the new Government is, first of all, as sensitive to unfavorable criticism as ever was the head-in-the-sand Castillo Administration.

Argentina's pro-democratic newspapers, some of which have discovered through police interference and closure that it does not pay to speak out, have become even more guarded than previously. When they can't toss orchids at some generally applied local policy, like Ramírez' demand for lower rents, they can confine themselves to *castellano* double talk and references to *nuestra patria* and *tradiciones gloriosas* to cover up what they would really like to say.

Time's air-express edition, the only United States news review with stories of last month's coup to reach Buenos Aires had the page containing its article scissored. The big press associations have long since stopped trying to file any interpretation of Argentine events—

they pretty well stick to the handouts. The independent staff correspondents—who always face the possibility of being bounced out should something they write meet with official frowns—shuttle back and forth to little pro-democratic Uruguay, where there is no blue-pencil to trim out anything they say.

Such organizations as the pro-United Nations youth group Accion Argentina, and the women's Junta de la Victoria, have been shuttered and accused of communism, which is outlawed, despite the fact that probably 90 percent of their members have never heard of Karl Marx. Which brings up the question: Does the change in Government really signify anything? Or in other words, does the new Government actually intend to change the policies followed by Castillo? The best opinion here is that there will be no really positive change. A break with the Axis may come, but any real steps in that direction seem missing so far.

Pro-democratic sources point out that the severance of diplomatic relations is in itself not the complete answer. Suppression of Axis espionage, sabotage and propaganda is the primary aim. The gradual dissolution of political parties, the wholesale arrests of suspected communists and the reluctance of the new military leaders to give anything but lip service to Pan-Americanism, have cast a shadow of gloom over many. Observers feel that the best test is what the Government will do to set in motion the machinery that will eventually permit restoration of a democratic system.

(Notes)

An *homenaje* dinner is scheduled for tonight to the outgoing Board of the State Merchant Fleet. The extremists amongst the nationalists in the new crowd argue that the Government should break up the dinner, that the men who comprise the Board were grafters of the very worst sort and should be in prison. Nevertheless, the other, less violent faction seems to have the upper hand, because not only is the dinner taking place, but the State Radio is inviting other stations to join in broadcasting the usual flowery speeches.

Inter-American solidarity very much to the fore today. Canada is celebrating her *Day*, and the fat little Minister of Agriculture, old General Mason—who somehow reminds me of Humpty-Dumpty—

has been chasing around from lunches for Canada, to receptions for Canada, and broadcasts for Canada. When he broadcasted, station authorities put their fingers in their ears and winced. Considering all the blah there has been lately about purifying speech, and using correct grammatical Spanish—it is rather curious that one of the Cabinet Ministers should stumble and mumble through an obviously written-for-him speech. When he came to the end, he was as surprised as anyone else. He turned the page over—to make quite sure there wasn't any more—and he and his hearers were left in mid-air. However, Humpty-Dumpty saved the day by walking closer to the microphone and mumbling into it: "*He dicho!*" ("I have spoken!") thus reassuring everyone on that score.

JULY 2nd

Dr. Santamarina, lone civilian member of the Ramírez Cabinet always looks lost among all those uniforms. One of Argentina's best business brains, he spoke to the Argentine Chamber of Commerce yesterday, stressing that means must be found, and quickly, of curbing the ever-increasing Argentine deficit. This year it will be close to one hundred million dollars U.S.—terrific for a country this size. Figured in pesos it is four times as great, and that ain't hay. Dr. Santamarina pointed out that though the nation's financial plight was serious, it was not by any means desperate. The Government has sufficient funds available to meet all immediate commitments and ample—a rarity in Latin America—credit facilities. He said that he anticipated no financial or credit difficulties this year; stressed that credit must not be abused and should only be employed within severe limitations.

Temporary expedients and provisional solutions should be abandoned in favor of real solutions, he cried, and it sounded impressive when he pointed out that this would be the Government's task. The co-operation of Argentine business is necessary, he added. Business is supposed to be reassured by this. Dr. Santamarina explained the first basic problem was the ever-increasing direct intervention of the State in private affairs. The Castillo Administration, he said, had

been intervening more and more directly in commercial and economic fields, partly because of present circumstances but in many cases unnecessarily. He gave no quick promises but held it was urgent that each case be studied to determine if Federal intervention were still needed.

Regarding the budget deficit, he explained that as President of the Banco de la Nacion and director of the Central Bank he had been able to view it from many angles. In 1942, he said, Argentina's deficit had amounted to two hundred and fifty million pesos. This year it is still increasing and may reach four hundred million pesos, due to the increased cost of the Administration and a falling off of income. That drew audible surprise. He must have anticipated this because he said that there were many Argentines who had expressed the opinion that such a deficit should not cause any particular uneasiness or comment. He did not mention the States directly, but he added that the deficits of the major powers had reached astronomical figures, going on to say:

"I don't agree with this theory, neither do I admit that it is possible to carry on indefinitely a system of deficits. During the short period in which the present Government has been in office it has obviously been impossible to study the problem from all aspects. However, the Ministry of Public Works has already put forward a scheme whereby fifty to sixty million pesos can be saved by suspending public works now under way or about to be started." On the other hand, he said that no economies would be possible in the military expenditures and purchases, estimated at one hundred and thirty million pesos. If anybody is to be cut, it won't be the military.

(Later)

Recent dispatches from Switzerland and other neutral European sources indicate that Franco was favorably mulling the idea of restoring the Monarchy in Spain. However, the yarns are regarded here and elsewhere in South America as inspired propaganda, especially designed to win English support for the increasingly wobbly Madrid regime. Latin America has been given only a mild dose of talk about the restoration of Don Juan. Franco, they think, is following the old system of deliberately playing down the throne propo-

sition on this side of the Atlantic because of a realization that it would not be acceptable.

Other Spanish moves to win British favor have been increasingly evident since the Allied African victory. Republican Spaniards, particularly those in Mexico, Uruguay and here, feel that Franco believes London would accept the Spanish king with Franco as adviser. Especially if the English were made to believe that the Falangists—who are the strongest opponents of restoration—were being checked. Franco always makes British and American officialdom think he is falling in line while at the same time continuing the old tactics behind their backs. This is again evident, as indicated by a check of Franco's recent Latin-American activities. Madrid's new Argentine Consul General, Mario de Pinies Bayona, first of the "dynamic diplomatic representatives" being sent to Latin America to intensify Falangist activities, arrived this week aboard the Spanish liner *Cabo de Buena Esperanza* and immediately began operations. With him was Lieutenant Colonel Emilio Fernandez Martos, new Military Attaché, whose special job will be to try to knit the new Argentine military regime into closer ties with General Franco.

Also aboard the *Cabo* was Lola Membrives, a Spanish actress who has spent a year in Spain and now returns to her second home here. She has been greeted by a blast of strong criticism by pro-democratic papers and charged with being a Falangist propagandist, planning to introduce Hispanidad ideas. The papers emphasize the fact that her company at the Teatro Comico includes a number of top Spanish actors all in high favor with the Franco regime.

The Franco Junta started to use entertainers and artists as traveling agents of the Falange during the Spanish War. In fact, it was a Falangist actor, José Gonzales Marin, who organized the Falange of Puerto Rico during his tour of the Western Hemisphere in 1936-37.

The appointment of new Franco Ambassadors and Ministers to Latin America included Teodomiro Aguilar y Salas, to Uruguay, Miguel Esperio Pedroso, to Venezuela, and Luis Olivares Bruguera, to Paraguay. Their basic job, according to best sources, is to drive a deeper wedge between the United States and our Good Neighbors by spreading fascist-toned Hispanidad, as opposed to Pan-Americanism.

Chased around with Lowell Thomas yesterday. He was here for a brief stop-over trying to get on the air for a broadcast to the States and got thrown for a toss by the censor. This time, however, it wasn't entirely the censor's fault. Pan-American Airways, who were handling his arrangements locally, sent him a wireless aboard the plane coming down from Rio, explaining that if he wanted to go on the air from Buenos Aires he'd better have his script finished aloft so that it could be translated at once and inspected by the local blue-pencilers. Doug Clark, Pan-American's hard-working publicity representative, met Lowell at the airfield at Moron and found he hadn't gotten beyond his notes. Lowell kept writing during the forty-five-minute automobile trip into town, and no sooner were they at the hotel when Doug started translating. This was already past seven, and Doug was only able to finish a page by 7:30. Since the broadcast was scheduled for 7:45, the whole thing had to be called off.

The script, incidentally, made no mention of Argentina, but dealt entirely with Lowell's experiences in Brazil. I don't know yet what he is going to say about his stop-over here, but he certainly managed to crowd in a terrific lot in a single day. Ed Bauman of the U.P. took him in for an interview with Ramírez and he also saw half a dozen other top shots, Ambassador Armour, and the United States press corps.

Josh Lee, the big United States politico, who has been named Chairman of the United States Civil Aeronautics Board, has also been in town hop-skip-jumping around Latin America, but with little better results. Last night the dapper but just-folks-speaking Josh was given a dinner by the Argentine Military Aviation boys at the Circulo Militar. Cordoned by a gallery of Pan-American Airways bigwigs, headed by Harold Roig, President of Panagra, and Harold Dean, of Pan-Air, he apparently got quite an earful of what Argentine aviation needs and wants from the States. Parts and equipment seem to be the principal necessity, but Lee is not making any promises. He has left the impression that the C.A.B. would do what it could, even though there isn't much hope until after the war, or at least until Argentina lines up with the States. He has visited the

local plywood plane factory and body plant, met and talked with operators of Argentina's four domestic lines and made a big hit with the military, so much so that he has been able to pave the way for many of the local United States aviation people, who hadn't been too successful previously. Lee would not say anything about whether or not the United States would continue to dominate Latin-American airlines after the war, but from what I hear the local military at least thinks that the United States will continue to be top dog and isn't too happy about American planes providing the principal international passenger service here. On the other hand, Pan-American is doing a terrific job building up a good public reaction, especially since the Axis has been squeezed out.

Rents are going down, and are the *porteños* happy? Last night the Government issued a decree ordering wholesale slashes on the rents on houses, rooms, apartments and everything else run by landlords, and making the decree retroactive to July 1st. The poor guys who pay under fifty pesos a month are automatically reduced 20 percent; those who pay fifty and one hundred pesos a month are cut 18 percent, and so on until four hundred pesos and upwards (approximately \$100 monthly) are cut 5 percent. The decree remains in force until 1945 and applies only to the Federal capital of Buenos Aires. The provinces are ordered to set up their own reduction programs by July 15th, adjusting according to local circumstances. There will be rent boards to hear complaints and make decisions. Landlords are already warned against cutting down on the hot water and steam heating, or badgering tenants into paying their old scale. Everybody is overjoyed, except the landlords; even the honest ones who have been charging fair prices, can't see how they are going to manage in the future.

The main reaction seems to be: "*Muy bien*, I'm going to save twenty pesos a month," and: "This is the first time I can remember when any Government was really doing anything for the poor people." The skeptical are suspicious, like the prospective mother-in-law eyeing a too-courteous candidate for a son-in-law. And second thoughts don't seem to be quite as favorable. There are many people here who are small landlords, people who have rented single rooms, or hard-working storekeepers and even laborers who have saved up, invested in a little property and thought to amplify their

earnings with a bit of additional revenue. They will also be affected and already talk is being heard that building construction is bound to suffer, since those with cash to invest in construction schemes will be jittery.

JULY 4th

If anybody dared put it there, I suppose the Stars and Stripes would be waving over the Palacio de San Martin, Argentina's Foreign Office, today. The American community which, I judge, probably numbers less than 1,000 in Buenos Aires alone, gave its annual Fourth of July dinner in the Hotel Plaza today. Foreign Minister Storni was the guest of honor. The big dining room—its walls frescoed with scenes from the *gaucho* life of a century ago—and the mirrored lounge were jammed with celebrating Yanks. Up at the head table diplomats of twenty-six friendly nations sat, stuffed themselves with turkey and listened to high-flown patriotic speeches by Hillary Driscoll, President of the North American Society of the River Plate, and by our Ambassador Armour. But Storni was the hero of the day. With his clear, ruddy complexion, he looks more Nordic than anything else. Storni sat delicately fondling a pink rosebud and occasionally nodding approval during the speeches in English. He says his English is thirty years old: too old to speak but good enough to understand. When his time came to take over the public-address system, it was soon evident that Storni was a belligerently friendly representative of our most unfriendly hemispheric nation. He stuck out a chin that had a neck behind it. And he promised Argentina's full co-operation, political as well as defensive, with the rest of the American hemisphere. He visioned America as becoming a "vast international union" and said that "Pan-Americanism was a geographical necessity." Getting away from the rhetoric, he frankly admitted that during the past month he had read the question in the eyes of representatives of the other American nations and said that he knew their chief concern was whether or not the unity of the American nations would be maintained. His answer was not direct, but he did say that Argentina would stand alongside

the American nations in accordance with her pledges. Then, "As intrigue and misleading statements are rampant, I further clarify that any nation which endeavors to hamper our solidarity and continental action is not with Argentina but against Argentina." The applause was, naturally, terrific. The Axis papers, which usually mention every little action of Government members, tonight completely ignored Storni's attendance at the celebration. Most of the Americans who attended the dinner are up in the clouds; they think this is a definite promise that Argentina is going to break with the Axis, and soon. My own feeling is that while Storni probably means everything he says, the colonels who are really running this military regime are merely pushing him forward as the man who is supposed to make it appear Argentina loves Washington. In the same way, Pertiné and others are pushed forward to convince Berlin that Argentina loves them. And, having "convinced" everybody, Argentina goes her own way.

JULY 5th

Another great announcement which, on its face, looks marvelous but which only time will prove: The Ministry of the Interior has issued instructions to the Federal Interventors in the provinces telling them not to interfere with the liberty of the press and forbidding them to censor any news reports. The Interventors are advised their attitude must be the same as that of the central Government: accepting "noble and well-inspired comments of the newspapers" and in no case trying to apply prior blue penciling. "The organs of the press," it is announced, "must be respected at all times, on the principle that the right of everyone commences and ends where that of others ends and commences!" So long as the papers "adjust their insinuations and suggestions to the essential purpose of drawing attention to problems or solutions and keeping the authorities and people informed regarding the advisability or necessity for altering, improving or extending all services in a tactful, respectful manner," the press will supposedly have no trouble. But here's the catch. Interventors are informed means should be found of avoiding

malicious comments, likely to disturb harmony or affecting good and friendly international relations. (In other words, no adverse comments on relations with the Axis.) Papers are also to avoid "observations tending to hurt susceptibilities when dealing with matters connected with the governmental organizations of foreign nations." Meaning, no attacks on totalitarianism, as such. And now the payoff: "The authorities appreciate at their true worth and in a spirit of understanding the purpose of their reports and publication of criticism. But journalists who forget the ethics of their important calling must be reminded that the Constitutional guarantees and privileges protecting our free Government are irreconcilable with abuse or calumny directed against representatives of authority." And although it isn't stated directly, apparently anybody who violates this "true principle" is going to find himself slapped into jail.

JULY 6th

Storni's Fourth of July speech continues to get a good play in the pro-democratic papers. The chorus of approval and the vigorous tone of most of the editorials is especially significant in view of the fact that the country is still under a state of siege. *La Prensa*, which always chooses to let things ride for a day or two before giving out, said this morning that Storni's declarations "are what the country has been waiting to hear for a year and a half," or, in other words, since the Rio de Janeiro conference when Ruiz Guinazú accepted the principle of continental security. *Prensa* declares Argentina's attitude "left many questions, many doubts and many worries as to whether hemisphere unity was not in danger of being disrupted." *Mundo* recalled the speech was reminiscent of the past when "Argentina stood firm with the Americas without calculating the consequences, or fearing the dangers of its course." *Critica* said the country "emerges from the tunnel and reaches daylight at last." All the papers agree Storni interpreted the sentiments of the Argentine people, and that this time Argentina means business, but I still have my doubts.

Some of the local newsmen say the dailies have been told they

may "prepare public opinion" for a *volte face* in Argentina's foreign policy. This is in such direct opposition to the general trend of Government policy in regard to freedom of speech and so on, that there would appear to be some lack of co-ordination in its method.

JULY 7th

United States representative John M. Coffee's demand for a Congressional investigation into the hemisphere activities of the Falange has been widely front-paged here and elsewhere in Latin America. Pro-democratic comment: "The probe should have been started a long time ago." A good many people are saying that the Emergency Advisory Committee over in Montevideo has had the Franco-ites under scrutiny for a long time, yet does nothing about their subversive activities or reveals its findings for reasons best known to Washington. The State Department's go-easy policy regarding Madrid seems to be the chief reason the Montevideo Committee has held back, even though it has a tremendous amount of information corroborating Coffee's statement that the Falange Española Tradicionalista is doing Hitler's work in those Good Neighbor countries from which the Axis has been booted out. Coffee's allegations, the papers report, are based in a large measure on a book entitled *Falange* by Allan Chase, a hard-working newspaperman who has been digging into the subject. From what I gather here, Uruguay, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, and other countries which Coffee declared should be asked to join in the probe would willingly co-operate, provided the way were shown. Many Latin-American Republics, Mexico being the outstanding exception, have been afraid to take too strong a stand against the Falangists, while Washington continues its appeasement policy and apparently shows little concern about Franco's knife-in-the-back practices south of the border.

(Later)

All of the United States correspondents here are worried about the fact that Frank Breeze was beaten up on his way home last night.

Frank is a tall, slim, friendly guy who is news manager of the local U.P. bureau. He was a block away from his apartment when a man who had been following him caught up to him in a dark spot and slugged him with a blackjack. Another man stepped out from behind a parked car and pummeled him with his fists. Breeze fell, but got up a moment later and tried to chase the attackers for at least a look. His bleeding from a gash in the head was so heavy, however, that he couldn't keep up, and he went home. The family doctor could not be located, so he was taxied to the Asistencia Publica. Six stitches were taken in the back of his head. Later Frank went to the police station and talked to them for an hour and a half. Although they promised an investigation, there have been no results so far. What we can't dope out is the reason. Breeze handles a lot of the incoming and outgoing news, but his name never appears on any copy and he certainly isn't known in the way Waldo Frank was known at the time of the much publicized beating last year. Some of the U.P. boys told me that they have always suspected fifth columnists working in their own bureau as translators and local news gatherers. The A.P. also has some Argentines of this tendency. Robbery apparently wasn't the motive, because they didn't try to get anything from him, and I'm sure it didn't have any personal basis. It may have been just a mistake but certainly looks suspicious. From now on I'm only going to walk on lighted streets.

(Note)

Ramírez was guest of honor at the traditional annual dinner of the armed forces, held in the big, garish Les Ambassadeurs hall last night. The press was not invited, but copies of the speeches were handed out. It's the same old stuff, Ramírez pledged maintenance and strengthening of the ties of friendship "that bind us to all the nations on earth and particularly to those of the Americas." Friends with everybody! He said that the Government fully realized the magnitude of its task and no doubt would make some mistakes but that these should not cause uneasiness as they would be solved in the "march forward." This Government seems to have no compunction about issuing orders which are impossible of fulfilment and then going back on itself when it finds its own measures aren't feasible.

But it is adamant about mistakes others may make. All public utility companies are consequently having a very rough time.

JULY 8th

More progress on the Axis-breaking front. The Administration tonight announces its intention of re-examining Argentina's foreign policy in the light of the Rio accords, at which the Castillo Government accepted many of the international commitments which the new regime repeatedly announces it intends to fulfil. Specifically mentioned is Resolution One, which affirms that "an active aggression against one American State is aggression against all," and which recommends that all American Republics break diplomatic ties with Japan, Germany and Italy. Also cited is Resolution Seventeen, which reaffirms the determination of the American Republics to prevent non-American nationals or organizations from engaging in subversive activities and which created the Montevideo Emergency Committee to co-ordinate measures against Axis propaganda, sabotage and espionage. The announcement of Argentina's new inventory of her foreign policy is contained in a letter which, Storni told us tonight, he had sent to Uruguayan Vice-President Guani, in the latter's capacity as President of the Montevideo Committee.

Storni's letter is actually a reply to a note which Guani sent Castillo last May 13th, reporting on the conclusions reached by the Committee Delegation which visited Buenos Aires between April 5th and 10th. In the letter Storni said that "certain initial measures of significance have already been taken"—the ban on codes—and that the Administration has accredited Guillerino Achaval, a career diplomat with the rank of Minister, as the chief Argentine delegate to the Committee without other duties, thereby strengthening Argentina's opportunity to co-operate. Previously, Miguel Chiappe, a constant objector, has been delegate, while also acting as Counsellor of the Argentine Embassy in Montevideo.

Storni also disclosed that a new Ministerial Committee created in May, 1942, to draft a program for a hemisphere conference on police and judicial measures, had been revived and given permanent

status to serve in an advisory capacity with the Government on hemisphere policy. Guani's May 13th note has apparently been passed to this group for study, and the group is supposed to work up some new measures to put the Montevideo Committee's suggestions into practice. A super pigeonhole, in my opinion.

JULY 9th

This is Argentina's Independence Day—the 127th—and the Ramírez Administration has certainly made it a super-duper celebration. Every scrap of bunting and flag has been brought out. Buildings, streets and homes are decorated with blue and white national colors. This afternoon 12,000 well-cadenced, sprightly marching soldiers, sailors and cadets marched along Avenida Alvear followed by the motorized columns. The Cabinet and leaders of the June 4th revolution swanked by in coaches and four, mounted blue and gold-garbed grenadiers before and behind them. It was a show with plenty of Old-World pomp and splendor. Probably few places in the world would think of putting on a similar display these days. Counting noses isn't easy, but possibly 200,000 people turned out to see Ramírez proudly sport the blue-and-white Presidential breast-band for his first really big public appearance.

However, even in the midst of the celebration, the Government has not been able to abandon the role of big teacher assigned itself. For a couple of days the police (although why it should be the police nobody can figure) have been sending out notes to the newspapers and radio stations telling them that they should do everything to influence the public to "behave correctly and respectfully" on the big day. The public has also been warned against breaking through the lines "in the desire to honor the President by an excessive display of enthusiasm." Apparently, they're afraid somebody might take a shot at him. The papers and radio, in an effort to comply with the suggestions for proper celebrating, have tossed in the whole book, and the amount of flowery rhetoric that has been spouted until now would float the Argentine Navy.

The crowds, it seemed to me, were fairly enthusiastic, but the

show was staged with so many Goebbels' touches that it is hard to tell how much of the enthusiasm was real. For example, just when Ramírez was marching near the stand reserved for the diplomatic corps, two big cages of beribboned pigeons were opened. The white birds soared upward and off in the direction of the suburbs. The crowd, in surprised delight *viva*-ed wildly, not because it was a dramatic touch, but because Ramírez' penchant for pigeons is well known. But any casual observer would have gotten the idea the cheers were all for him.

The big social function was tonight's gala performance of *La Bohème* (starring the Metropolitan's Norman Cordon) at the Colon. Ramírez sat in the red-and-gold curtained box with the be-medaled members of his Cabinet and official family. The ladies, as usual, were in a separate box. The intermissions—which are the real purpose of the performances—were even longer than ever, and the marble and brocaded corridors and foyers glittered with the gold and ermine of the promenaders. It looked like a court scene, much more colorful than in Castillo's days. Chief interest was in the Ramírez daughters making their first public appearance. Even with all the Latin courtesies in the world, it is impossible to describe them as beauties.

JULY 10th

Culaciatti has been put back in the Federal pen to await trial on still unspecified charges of graft and bribery. We learn today that a special body has been appointed to investigate his conduct, and the Government lets it be known that it has amassed sufficient proof to warrant his detention and transfer. However, leading lights of the legal profession assure me Culaciatti was too clever, and, though morally there is every reason for his trial, they doubt whether any honest court could accept what little proof has been found against him. It is interesting to hear the young law students of Nazi persuasion on the subject. They rant against Culaciatti, declaring he should have been stood up and shot the night of the revolution. I asked one whether, as a future lawyer, he was a believer in execu-

tion without trial. He gave me a dirty look, turned his shoulder and continued blustering to more receptive friends. The curious thing is that a couple of months ago, when Culaciatti was doing everything possible to obstruct the activities of pro-democratic organizations like Accion Argentina and the Junta de la Victoria, these same young men looked upon him as the savior of his country. One more proof that they don't think for themselves, and that either Berlin or Madrid is doing their thinking for them.

JULY 12th

I hear from the best possible sources that a powerful battle is going on behind the scenes among the Cabinet and high-ranking leaders of the Military Government on the question of breaking relations with the Axis. Spurred by the news of the invasion of Sicily and by new Allied victories, a group within the inner circle (supposedly headed by Storni) is said to be demanding severance of ties with Rome, Berlin and Tokyo, or at least the taking of severe steps to curb Hitler's fifth column Argentine bridgehead in this hemisphere. Another bunch, including a number of important outrightly prototalitarian officials, insists on the continuance of the whole-hog neutrality stand. Ramírez, I understand, is in the middle of this seesaw and as a result the revolutionary Government's policy—apparently never determined in advance of the June 4th coup, and wobbly ever since—continues to go first one way and then another. Ramírez' personal popularity and power seem to be on the increase, although there are still many who believe the tight clique of colonels is more and more running things behind the scenes. The possibilities of a new counter-revolution by extremist elements, either within the Army or from political groups, gets more and more remote.

There is still plenty of uncertainty among the people, especially among business men, and this has had its effect in restlessness and intense speculation as to just what the Government's talk of Pan-American solidarity means. The best sign so far that the Government really may break was the announcement that a re-study was being made of the Rio Conference resolution referring to severance of

relations. Plenty of the editorial and headline writers got bullish over this and, I think, were over-optimistic. Castillo also followed the practice of insisting the Rio resolutions were constantly under study, even though observance was limited to superficial actions as effective as a cop waving a nightstick to hold a Dillinger. This rose-tinted-glass view is not confined to Argentines. Some of my colleagues share the same idea. However, it seems to me that for every favorable sign there is one in the opposite direction. For instance, on the same day that Ramírez shouted that "a united America is invulnerable" and that deeds would replace words, the courts acquitted the heads of the Federacion de Circulos Alemanes and the Sociedad Alemana de Beneficencia, both leading Nazi groups. And while the Government has taken many highly popular steps, especially getting rents cut, lowering prices of foodstuffs and revising salaries and wages, its debits include an even more severe censorship than under Castillo, the banning of more organizations and meetings than previously and the failure to take any steps against Axis sympathizers, either in high places or low.

JULY 14th

Tonight comes news of the strongest Hitler-like step of all. Five pro-democratic organizations have been ordered dissolved on the grounds of extremist political tendencies. They're all charged with being "infiltrated with communists." Federal and local police, under the direct orders of the Minister of the Interior, have closed the Junta de la Victoria, the women's organization with about 40,000 members and more than 100 branches, the Confederacion Democratica Argentina de Solidaridad y Ayuda a los Paises Libres, which sent thousands of dollars' worth of food packages to the Allied nations, the Comision Sanitaria para la Ayuda de los Pueblos Libres, and a branch of the Federacion General del Trabajo, a leftist offshoot of the General Labor Federation, outlawed by the parent group. In addition, though not announced officially, the Free French organization is having a difficult time and pro-United States organizations fear action.

The police also ordered dissolution within forty-eight hours of the two Nazi groups whose heads were freed on fraud charges. Both operated under aliases which the Nazi party created to reinstate its activities after they were decreed closed in May, 1939. Apparently this is designed to create the impression that the new moves are not specifically anti-democratic. The official statement was that the closures are the result of the groups deviating from the purposes for which they were originally chartered, "due to infiltration of elements of communist ideology." The explanation has been considered weak by the majority of Argentines to whom I've talked and to whom news of the closures came as a profound shock. While admitting there may have been some few communists in the Junta, the Confederacion and the Comision, their purposes and results were generally considered excellent and the groups were outstanding leaders of the pro-United Nations activities. Senora Ana Rosa Schlieper de Martinez Guerrero, who has always been active in feminist activities here and throughout the hemisphere, is the President of the Junta. Will have to try to get her reaction.

Nationalist Argentines are jubilant; they insist the Government has proceeded very justly. All the organizations, they say, were pouring millions out of the country, which might just as well have been devoted to taking care of the local poor. They stare one blankly in the face when you point out that in a country like this there should be no poor.

The drive against the communists, I understand, is apparently inspired by reactionary leaders within the Church. Besides the closings there have been several hundred secret arrests already made. It is common gossip that Monseñor Franceschi and Padre Wilkinson are exercising plenty of influence behind the scenes. Franceschi, a pro-totalitarian for years, has given pro-Axis speeches and sermons, and edits the important church magazine *Criterio*. Wilkinson, of Scotch-Irish descent and long an Army chaplain, has been mouthpiece for the Casa Rosada since June 4th and reportedly writes many of the Presidential speeches. He is a firm enemy of what he terms license which, as he interprets it, is anything that smacks of liberalism. He is a dangerous customer.

JULY 15th

People here had hardly gotten over the shock of yesterday's closures, when the cops marched into the main offices of Accion Argentina, strongest anti-totalitarian voice in this country, and said they were taken over. As with the others, the explanation is that all "extremist political influences must be eradicated." If the other groups were leftist, Accion Argentina certainly wasn't. I know them well. Probably in the membership of nearly half a million anti-fascists there are some communists, but in its three years of existence the organization has always opposed extremist theories of the left or right. Alejandro Ceballos was Accion Argentina's President, and Carlos Saavedra Lamas, José Maria Cantilo and Adolfo Bioy, all former Foreign Ministers served on the Board. They could hardly be considered Reds. Nor could such liberal leaders as Alfredo Palacios (By the way, this perennial Senator is Senator no more since Congress has been dissolved), Socialist Deputy Nicolas Repetto (now touring the United States), and the former Finance Minister Federico Pinedo, who are some of the country's best brains. Ex-Senator Antonio Santamarina, leader of the Conservative Party and brother of the present Minister of Finance, was another member. And even the most rabidly pro-Nazi nationalist would have a hard time charging those men with being communists. Will the people do anything about it, however? Certainly they didn't fight back today when their premises were raided, although I suppose they could not have accomplished much. But what next? The police certainly have orders to blot them out completely. The Fire Department rushed around to Accion Argentina's headquarters right after the cops, and, using their high-pressure hoses, scraped every sign from the wall, in much the same way as Nazi Storm Troopers eliminated all trace of organizations which Hitler ordered dissolved. Maybe the Government will take some steps against Afirmacion Argentina, the pro-Nazi group which is Accion Argentina's opposite number. Or perhaps there will be some action against the nationalists—all of whose policies the Government seems to be following. I've been getting some dope together on these groups, and the deeper I dig in, the more dangerous they seem.

The foreign press representatives called on Ramírez in a body today and, in their best collective Spanish, requested some easing up on the erratic and unpredictable (not to mention inexperienced) censorship. I wasn't there, but the boys said "Palito" seriously assured them the Government had nothing to hide. He left the impression that the blue penciling would get lighter, but when the boys tried to get out some follow-up stories on the closing of the pro-democratic organizations, they found the censors were just as hard-headed as ever.

Interventions and closings continue. The March of Time's *One Day of War*, a striking, dramatic picture dealing with the battle on the Soviet front, has been suddenly withdrawn. The short was approved by the censor last week with only two cuts, one the translation of the words "Nazi hordes," and the other, the scene depicting a child killed by Nazi bombs. It had been shown in the Rex and a lot of the newsreel houses, but apparently the Government just got around to realizing that it had been made with material shot by Soviet cameramen and was pro-Russian. So no go!

Some of the other closures are even daffier. The local De Gaulle organization's July bazaar was ordered closed, but a Giraud lawn party can run. The potent Association of Argentine Meat Producers, which is the equivalent of the United States Stock Raising Association, has been intervened, all of this part of a policy of not permitting any organizations or activities in which the State does not have a finger, especially organizations which might influence people or serve as a foundation for organized opposition.

The methods follow the Brazilian pattern somewhat, except that here the close-'em-up boys are a group within a group. There is lots of cross-wire pulling behind the scenes rather than one-man control, and it remains to be seen if the closures will be benevolent, like Brazil's, or as totalitarian as Germany's.

It looks to me like the old formula of neutralizing the population with social benefits and checking any chances for fighting back. Argentina's present circumstances are a perfect set-up. The political parties have been unpopular and ineffective, all except the socialists. And so many socialists have been jailed in recent weeks, some of

them charged with being communists, that they're pretty well nullified and have little chance for expression. Besides, they've been given plainly to understand that getting any ambitious ideas will bring stronger measures.

The trade unions are weak and the workers have been getting most of what benefits they got from such social-minded leaders as Monseñor Miguel de Andrea, who is both a Catholic prelate and a trade-union founder. Andrea has a certain influence with this Government, but the reactionary churchmen seem to have fully as much if not more drag.

At the same time the Government is trying to convince the people of its good intentions. Smartest move it has made in this direction has been to lift the restrictions on corn growing. Last year's overproduction had to be burned. Some people think raising the ban may indicate Argentina hopes to sell more to the United Nations with or without breaking relations.

JULY 17th

This is still the hemisphere's dream town for people who want to have a good time. Pesos are free and easy and are being poured over the ticket windows, night-club tables and elsewhere with very little realization that practically everywhere else, the democracies and the dictatorships are locked in an increasingly powerful half-Nelson. Despite the Military Government, there are fewer uniforms seen here than anywhere else in the hemisphere. Visitors clipping in from Manhattan—four days by plane if you can wangle that A-1-A priority—express amazement at finding Buenos Aires head-in-the-clouds attitude. Rio de Janeiro, with the country at war, has suffered severely with the pinch of shortages as have Santiago, Mexico City, Lima, and the other Latin capitals. But here, rationing directly affecting consumers applies only to gas and tires, and there is seemingly plenty of the former if you know how to get it.

Probably more private cars—most of them Detroit makes, although there's still a percentage of English, German and Italian—can be spied here in Buenos Aires than in any other comparative

metropolis. Cabs which across the river in Montevideo, for example, are as scarce as Hitler-Stalin handshakes, continue to cruise at all hours without even rate increases. Lack of *nafta* is seemingly no problem. There is no doubt that the lack of any pinch on such items as well as more important ones has helped keep Argentina as neutral and unconcerned as she is.

The film houses are all doing a terrific business, and *Casablanca*, *Black Swan*, *The Major and the Minor*, and *A Yank at Eton* have been packing them in despite the heavy censorship some have gone through. Reaction to these anti-Axis films, incidentally, gives a good sidelight on how Argentines favor the democracies. The box-office reactions provide a Gallup Poll that nobody can load. There are about 600 film houses in Buenos Aires alone, 70 percent of which play Hollywood pictures almost exclusively. Despite all Herr Hitler and his swastika boys have done, they haven't been able to arouse enough volunteer interest to keep more than one feature theatre and two newsreel houses operating in this, the largest city in South America. In a town which goes to the movies more than it does practically anything else, that is an indicator that can't be ignored. You don't have to make high-powered surveys, talk to diplomatic circles or give out with the latest tip to judge what's what—just go to the movies.

The legitimate theatres are also going strong and Paulina Singerman's *Himeneo* at the Odeon, and Luis Sandrini's *El Diablo Andaba en los Choclos* (The Devil Walks Amidst the Corn) are the clicks of the season.

Trying to get into the night clubs here is no easy job, especially on week-ends and the perennial *fiestas*. Rendez-Vous, latest of the new fancy saloons, has the Lecuona Cuban Boys shaking their *maracas* until the dawn. Ray Ventura, moved over from Paris, dispenses French-accented *yanqui* jazz at the Embassy. Eduardo Armani, who used to be the top fiddler at the Colon, now batons Broadway melodies on the Alvear roof. The Ta-Ba-Ris, the Gong, Ciro's, and other after-dark spots get the upper crust, but the middle-class night clubs, the Spanish-style Goyescas, El Embrujo de Sevilla and Trineo are all jammed to the doors.

The Vice-President, Rear Admiral Saba Hector Sueyro, died yesterday. The public hardly knew him, but from all the signs, they're to regard his death as a national calamity. Last night all broadcasters were ordered to carry appropriate funereal programs and today a national day of mourning has been declared. All public business is at a standstill; theatres and places of amusement are crepe-draped. Radio stations have been ordered off the air as from 3 p.m. to seven o'clock, and again after ten at night. Tomorrow they may broadcast, but without commercial advertising. They must hook up with the Government outlet to relay all the funeral ceremonies, which are to be such as have never been afforded even very prominent figures in Argentine history. Instead of creating a feeling of national sympathy and sorrow, this has caused as merry a ha-ha as has been heard in South America for a long time. Puns on the name Saba are passed around in the cafés. People are saying to each other: "*Sa-ba se fue*" (Saba, he's gone). They ask each other why they should be expected to hear funeral dirges for a day and a half because an obscure Navy officer has died. Evidently Ramírez greatly loved his old schoolmate. Orders for this national tear-jag have caused something very much akin to consternation. I hear people ask: "What would we be expected to do if anything happened to Ramírez?" They may realize only too quickly that this military clique considers itself deserving of absolute deification. The Bourbon dynasty's belief in its divine right to rule is the only comparison that comes to mind.

No more divorce advertisements are to be allowed in the local papers. Editors and publishers have been advised by the Presidential Press Bureau that ads from lawyers living abroad or offering free advice on how to get unshackled quickly are *verboten*. Under Argentine law divorce is not recognized or allowed. Today's order says that this kind of advertising affects "the Christian principles on which family life is founded, attacks family unity and is against Argentina's traditional principles." The Church is exerting more and more influence on the military to curb what it considers license.

JULY 19th

This is from today's uncensored cable:

Why does Argentina cling so stubbornly to her neutrality policy? Simply because Ramírez and the military officials heading the new Government are pro-fascist and outrightly favor the Axis? Or is it because the rich, conservative, *estancia*-owning classes who supported the previous Government were also pro-German? To a certain extent that is true, but there are other, deeper reasons which perhaps have never been really explained, especially to the United States. Seeking the answers, I have just talked to a number of the highest-placed Argentine authorities and best-informed observers. Their frank, naturally unquotable replies may cause a shock. But understanding the reasoning behind the powerful minority which runs things is important. Here are the ten principal points:

1) A terrifying, unexplainable, Church-fostered fear that joining the United Nations will somehow mean a sweep of communism through Argentina. The present ruthless drive to liquidate all pro-United Nations organizations even mildly suspected of liberalism is regarded by many people as possibly an advance step to some far-off severance of diplomatic relations with the Axis.

2) That old Nazi-fostered fear of *yanqui* imperialism and the belief that accepting Lend-Lease would mean "mortgaging their souls." Jointly established air bases, for example, are regarded by the military as possible stepping stones for a big United States take-over of Argentina.

3) The feeling that after the war and regardless of who wins, Argentina's products will be needed and that the United Nations won't punish her for failure to break, while the Axis might if she did. Besides, business with both sides is still profitable. So, say Argentines, what does it matter if, for instance, some Argentine goods shipped to Franco merely use Madrid as a way-station en route to Berlin. Business comes first, even business with Hitler.

4) Breaking relations will increase taxes. Argentina would have to spend for defense, etc., if she joined the United Nations, and therefore the rich conservatives who pay little now want no change,

especially one that would hit their most vulnerable spot—the pocket-book.

5) There remains the cocksure belief that despite pro-democratic criticism, Argentina as a neutral is far better off in many ways than almost any other hemisphere Republic. The sales of meat and wheat to England are high; prices are good. Food for home consumption is abundant and comparatively cheap. Industry is booming, despite limitations of some imports. There has been no real pinch.

6) Washington's go-easy attitude has permitted Argentina to get a goodly share of vital items for building, manufacture and other business. Many have felt that had there been a real crackdown, Argentina would have swung to the United Nations camp long ago. The appeasement policy gave Buenos Aires so much of what she wanted that a squeeze, while talked of, has never been felt.

7) Many highly placed Argentines, particularly in the German-trained Army, still aren't entirely convinced there is going to be any quick United Nations victory. "Wait and see," they say.

8) The presumption that war will be a long-drawn-out affair has developed in the minds of many influential people who hope their country, despite the Casablanca unconditional-surrender pledge, may—possibly in collaboration with the Vatican—serve as the world's peacemaker.

9) Argentina wants to keep her profitable, Castillo-created State Merchant Fleet operating. Neutral Swedish and Spanish, Portuguese and Swiss ships also carry a great bulk of traffic to Buenos Aires which, it is felt, would be curbed, following a break.

10) While some Argentine merchant ships like the *Victoria* and the *Rio Tercero* have been torpedoed, most Argentine boats move with comparatively little fear of subs. As one of the world's largest food exporters, Argentina feels she can't depend on Allied ships to call for and take away her products and believes that she will make out better as a continued neutral than an Ally.

Before sending the cable, I checked it with a good many people and they agreed that it is a good cross-section of opinion here. Let us hope it will explain things a little more clearly—and not bounce back.

JULY 20th

The Italian Government which since the break of war permitted twenty-four-hour telephone service between the Vatican and neutral countries, including Argentina, has, since Saturday's bombing of Rome, refused to allow any calls except to Axis Embassies and officials. In answer to a cable from New York I tried to get through to the Papal Press Office today and also attempted to reach the American College at Rome. Percy Clark at Transradio told his operators to spare no efforts to make contact, and they got the Italian capital easily enough. But when they explained that I was calling on behalf of United States newspapers, they were told an official O.K. was necessary. I had to supply enough additional information to constitute a small life history. Then they tried again. Several hours later I was informed the Rome operators reported no calls were permitted anybody in the Holy See except those approved by Mussolini's Government which controls lines going through to the Vatican. In other words, any Italian spies can call Rome all they please but nobody can phone the Vatican without fascist approval.

This morning's papers and those yesterday afternoon splashed the news of the bombing of Rome. It is a story of special interest here because of the terrific Italian population. All in all, I think the news was well handled, for it emphasized the bombing of military targets and the efforts to avoid damaging monuments or injuring civilians. Monsignor Santiago Copello has issued an open letter saying that the bombing of the Eternal City and the crown of Christian civilization "adds to the profound sorrow which weighed our spirits since the war began with losses of lives and terrible suffering for innocents." He added that the news caused the "deepest pain, but not for political reasons."

JULY 21st

The purification continues. With true reformist zeal this Government is determined that no one is to have a say in the management of the country—no one except the colonels who are pulling all the

behind-scene wires. Latest measure is a decree prohibiting professional associations—that is to say, unions, mutual aid or other labor associations—from any participation in politics. This means that they may exist for the sole purpose of looking after affairs the Government considers “inherent to their nature,” otherwise they will be deprived of all legal status. They are also forbidden to accept subsidies from political associations, either national or foreign. Furthermore, the management “must be left in the hands of actual or authentic workers or employers.” All representatives of such organizations must be able to prove that they actually do belong to the trade, profession or craft with which the association is connected. Members may not join more than one guild or association representing their respective profession, trade or craft. Such associations “may not support ideologies or postulates at variance with the basic precepts of Argentine nationality or the National Constitution”; trade unions must exclude from their proceedings any union action tending to enforce compulsory affiliation in the union (no check-off); nor may they restrict or limit affiliation of associates for reasons of race, creed or political or philosophical ideology. Workers’ associations are precluded from receiving subsidies from employers, nor may employers participate directly or indirectly in the direction of the entity; employers’ associations, on the other hand, must preclude any intervention or participation by employees or laborers in their administration or management. Two-thirds of administrative or representative offices must be exercised by Argentines, or naturalized citizens of at least five years’ standing.

Obtaining the required legal status for such associations is subject to the most stringent rules, so that no detail of their organization or activities may escape supervision and direction. The National Labor Department is to audit all accounts, minutes of meetings and, as far as one can gather from the very lengthy decree, even the actual breathing of members of such associations. Associations which may have been able to obtain legal status will be able to represent trades, guilds, professions, etc. in negotiations, arbitrations and so on of labor questions. These regulations apply throughout the country—and it is the way the Government intends to enforce them that is important.

It becomes increasingly evident that this is a Red-baiting Adminis-

tration, and that the Government is paving the way to formation of its own Nazi-patterned labor legions. Both employers and employed are to be ruled with an iron hand, and the Government will do the deciding.

(Later)

I'm given to understand that the great wave of laughter which swept the country over the radio silence decreed by the Government on Admiral Sueyro's death, and the Government's assumption that the people would thus automatically be steeped in grief, even drifted into the Casa Rosada. Apparently Father Wilkinson was responsible for these measures, or rather recommended them to Ramírez. As a result, the colonels are incensed and are insisting that such priestly influence be tempered and removed. At all events, Father Wilkinson's soldierly figure (he always wears an Army uniform—and very smartly too) hasn't been seen so much at the Casa Rosada of recent days.

JULY 22nd

Apparently more miffed than usual by stories which have been coming out of Santiago and Montevideo, the Government yesterday issued a communiqué that wasn't mysterious to any of us who manage to keep in touch with the outside world, but certainly had many people here guessing. The communiqué said: "In reference to malicious versions circulated in the country and abroad by unscrupulous persons, alleging that the Government contemplates certain political reforms, and attributing to it sentiments in respect to other countries which are irreconcilable with loyal Argentine friendship, such versions are declared entirely devoid of the truth. The Government's internal and external orientation remain as clearly and publicly enunciated by the President on various occasions."

All this constant denial of rumor only results in greater restlessness. People in the provinces and *campo* who had heard nothing of the rumors, must now be asking themselves what it's all about. From what I gather around the news agencies, it is principally a refuta-

tion of a story which John White sent the *New York Herald Tribune*, reportedly datelined on the Chilean border at Mendoza. I haven't seen the dispatch itself, although I did hear a B.B.C. broadcast quoting from it, saying the Government planned to establish a corporative state, along anti-Semitic, anti-communist, anti-foreign lines.

The Government is getting more and more touchy about these comments from outside, and I know they're interested in my uncensored Montevideo stories. Papers here aren't allowed to reprint anything unfavorable from abroad. Yesterday *Vanguardia*, the socialist daily and one of the bravest of the lot, was closed down indefinitely, and other papers weren't allowed to report the fact or comment on it. *Vanguardia* has been criticizing the closure of Accion Argentina. Another article headed "No news yet but we are hoping" listed Nazi-fascist papers and magazines still functioning unmolested. It is surprising *Vanguardia* hasn't been shut down before, because in recent weeks it has been using some other subtle but effective editorials. One that I particularly recall talked about a Federal slum-clearance project, and suggested that the people would welcome restoration of their liberties and Constitutional guarantees more than promises of higher standards of living.

The tug-of-war among the opposing elements in the Government itself makes things hard to dope out. It is going to take a while before we are certain how far the military is willing to go. So many things help confuse the issue. Not all the people who are against neutrality are pro-Axis. Neither are all of those who favor breaking, pro-democratic. Many just feel that economic and military assistance are basic needs that can only be covered by breaking with the Axis. But those who want to run with the Axis and benefit from the democracies are still in the lead.

JULY 23rd

Pro-democratic Argentines, I learn on the best authority, are making attempts to line up support of anti-fascist forces in other Latin-American countries, because they believe that the spread of totalitarian poison from Buenos Aires may—if unchecked—reach every corner of our hemisphere. They are frank, saying they believe any

counter-move against what they call the "Army of Occupation" is impossible, for apparently there is no group within the ranks of officers and men sufficiently concerned to dispute their leaders. These pro-democratic Argentines believe subjecting the Ramírez Administration to the white light of international publicity will cause it to go slow on its authoritarian plans. They also feel that public and official pressure from outside may shift the course, although naturally there are many arguments that any steps they take may cause Ramírez and the colonels to adopt even stronger measures. The appeal for support has already been favorably received in Uruguay and Chile, but not much progress is being made elsewhere. Labor and liberal groups in the United States and Mexico seem to be too occupied with the war and their own problems to be aware of what a Rome and Berlin patterned Government might mean if allowed to continue unhampered. Although it has been in office less than two months, many Argentines tell me the present regime has already done far more to curb and cripple democratic rights and freedoms than any previous occupants of the Casa Rosada. The first signs of an underground press are already being noted. Since the regular papers are prohibited from mentioning many of the anti-democratic steps, little, secretly printed leaflets and papers are being distributed. One I have here reads: "Acts which the censor will not allow to be published or commented upon." Many of the events I have been jotting in this journal are included, but the list grows day by day.

JULY 24th

This story is almost too much like Nazi Germany to be true, but I have checked it from too many sources to make it appear phony. The police, in their drive to clean out communists, raided two big publishing houses, Editorial Claridad and Editorial Problemas. I have been given a secret list of the books that were seized. While it is true that some of them are communist, it is hard to understand how Joseph Davies' *Mission to Moscow* or the Ex-Dean of Canterbury's *The Soviet Power* can be rated as Red literature. According

to the story, the cops took a truckload of books to an outlying Army barracks for a secret bonfire. Nothing can be said about it in print. They may be stopping communist propaganda, but they are certainly not doing anything about Falangist Franco's latest effort; a weekly Axis-lauding newsreel, which made its first appearance here tonight in the Alvear, a swastika show place long since blacklisted both by the United States and the British. This *Noticario Español* shares top honors on a bill that takes in the whole Axis: Nazis, Italians and Japs. It isn't quite as anti-democratic as its Berlin-Rome-and-Tokyo-produced running mates, but it does follow the Goebbels line to the letter. There are sequences depicting "happy Blue Legion volunteers" leaving Madrid to "fight with the comrades in arms against the Soviet"; other shots of the "enthusiastic co-operation" Spaniards are giving the New Order and a fancy-dress diplomatic reception featuring Wilhelmstrasse diplomats. An elaborately montaged introduction keeps flashing back to *El Caudillo* himself and his "love for his Hispanidad children in Latin America."

JULY 25th

While cocktailing, we almost missed getting the news of Mussolini's fall. But the radio was turned on for dance music and we heard the announcement. Plenty of excitement! Mme. Rachel Berendt—whose prestige as an actress is as great in Buenos Aires as it was in Paris, when Paris was French—was overjoyed and popped back to rehearsal humming the "Marseillaise" all mixed up with "God Save the King." Our host became so excited that he tossed a cocktail shaker across the room, almost into my lap. Nobody could remember the "Giovinezza," or we would have hustled around to give it the works outside the Italian-fascist *Mattino d'Italia* only a block away. Instead we went out along Calle Corrientes and the *canillitas* (newspaper boys) were yelling the biggest headlines they have had since June 4th. It is still pretty hard to get any official opinion, but the majority of Argentina's three million Italians (or people of Italian extraction) were anti-fascists. In front of the newsboards of *La Prensa*, *La Nacion* and *Mundo* they seemed to be overjoyed.

One of the boys did go over to the *Mattino* to see if he could get more reaction; he found they were more confused than anybody. It is going to be interesting to see how the Italian Embassy and the blacklisted Italian banks take it. I bet that they'll soon be claiming they were really anti-Mussolini all the time.

The possibility of severance of Argentine diplomatic relations with the Axis seems hardly likely. One thing that complicates the situation is that while Italians here have been generally anti-fascist, their love for the mother country is strong. They have, therefore, always favored Argentina's maintaining her ties with the home country. Now that Mussolini is out, they will probably keep insisting Argentina should stick with the new Italian Government whatever it turns out to be. Many local Italians swear allegiance to the Italian crown and have great respect for old King Vittorio Emmanuele.

The senora dashed over to see her hairdresser last night. He is from the south of Italy and married to our butcher's daughter. The old butcher is a fascist, and son-in-law has to be very circumspect in anything he says in the old man's presence. When she gave young Roque the news, the tears sprang readily into his eyes and he pathetically asked: "Now, yes, Signora, we can be Allies?" He seemed to feel that as long as the King was allowed to run things, Italy would be a better place, but he had no love for Musso. His father had fought in the last war, and Roque seemed to be worried about what his old man might be going through; he said his pride would suffer so much over a defeat.

Today the local press and radio stations received very precise instructions as to what may or may not be said about the fall of the first dictator. Papers are told what size type they may use for the headlines. No commentaries may be published or broadcast. As one of my local colleagues told me: "Look you, *ché*, if one dictator falls, others can do the same! *Haga la cuenta!*"

JULY 27th

This will probably get top headlines in the States, but I'm not so sure of its meaning here. Last night Federal Investigators walked

into the local branches of General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and International Harvester, and four United States and European tire companies: Goodyear, Firestone, Dunlop and Michelin, with copies of a decree signed by the President and the Ministers of Agriculture, Interior and Foreign Affairs. In the legal point-by-point language which the military like so well, the decree stipulated that in view of charges filed against them for violation of past Government decrees concerning the sale of tires, they were subject to immediate Government supervision. At first it looked like an anti-United States step, but apparently it is more an attempt to prevent a transportation crisis. Seemingly the Government is at last aware tires won't last forever, even though the streets of Buenos Aires today are jammed with private cars, trucks and buses and streams of cruising taxis, which look fabulous to travelers just in from the States and other hemisphere countries.

Argentina normally consumes 10,000 tons of rubber annually and is classed as a 550,000-tire-per-annum market. But in the first six months of 1942, imports dropped to 3,000 tons, and in the first six months of this year they zoomed down to only forty-five tons, all of it from Bolivia. There is no relief in sight. The only sure supply is a measly 250 tons annually from Bolivia (not counting any finished tires smuggled from Brazil) and the Government now finds that through past negligence there is a possibility of a shortage. Somebody or something must take the blame. Until the middle of June, when rubber was decreed a national reserve and half-hearted rationing began, the only restriction to consumers was that they use 70 percent of what they used in 1941. It is estimated that only 700 or 800 tons of rubber are left in the country. The Government wants to keep close control and see that no unnecessary selling or dodging goes on, apart from learning just how much rubber there is in the country and how it is being used. Inspectors are still on duty at the tire and automobile plants, even though Ford and General Motors had neither tires nor cars to speak of.

These Government decrees succeed each other hourly! The military keeps insisting it believes in deeds not words—yet writes more decrees than any previous Administration. They seem to have a mania for changing things. Now they have decided to change the time. Daylight saving is to be eliminated on the 31st. These constant

changes become more confusing, but the *criollos* accept the irritations with surprising calm, shrugging their shoulders and saying: "*Déjelos, déjelos, ya se van a cansar.*" (Let them be, let them be, they'll soon tire themselves out.) But I'm afraid that by the time they wake up to the real nature of these "reformers," it will be too late for them to do anything except fight for their lives.

JULY 28th

Pampero has been silenced, for how long we don't know. The official order announced this afternoon says five days. The closure is decreed under the state of siege, and it is the first time such a measure is taken against an Argentine Nazi sheet. Importantly, it isn't for anything *Pampero* said against the democracies. They overstepped in accusing the Military Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, General Armando Verdaguer, of having played politics and given jobs to friends. His denial of the charges last night brings this reaction. It is all right to attack F.D.R., Churchill and freedom—but not an Argentine Army officer.

The Government tonight seized three French ships immobilized here since the fall of France in June, 1940. They will be incorporated in the National Merchant Fleet, now totaling approximately 120,000 tons, all picked up since the war began. The step was taken without previous notice; the Foreign Office explained that it was designed to "avoid the possibility of sabotage." This country has paid for, or made arrangements to pay for all the boats she could seize. Argentina has been able to build a sizeable fleet out of the war and her "neutrality."

JULY 29th

There is little likelihood the resignation of Mussolini will have any immediate effect on the Ramírez Administration. Here are some of the reasons:

1) All Argentine newspapers and radio stations were officially notified to stick to straight news and withhold any joyful editorializing. As a result, none of the leading papers have commented. Thus the public's true feelings are held in check.

2) The Government has made plain its attitude in statements that "loyal friendships will continue" and in censoring reports originating in Santiago and elsewhere that severance of relations with the Axis was imminent. "We aren't mad at anybody" is the official attitude. Versions to the contrary, it says, are all spread by "unscrupulous persons."

3) Ramírez and the Cabinet have signed a decree reaffirming the gag-making state of siege. This has been upheld by the Supreme Court in a suit brought against the Chief of Police. I think the Government is going to make it stick even harder.

4) The Vice-Presidency left vacant last week by the death of Rear-Admiral Sueyro, is to be left unfilled. *Políticos* think this will concentrate further power in Ramírez' hands.

5) The tightening of regulations governing broadcasting are making it even more difficult than previously to put on pro-democratic programs. The kind of pure Spanish long demanded by Franco's Consejo de Hispanidad is being boosted. The new restrictions, incidentally, have sharply increased tuning-in of United States short-wave stations now being heard with increased clarity because of the new system of beaming started early this month. London is also making a strong play for listeners here and daily ads appear in some papers, calling attention not only to Uruguayan re-broadcasts of war news, but to direct-from-London transmissions. Most of the news that comes in from the States and England is pretty restrained, but a recent B.B.C. transmission quoting a *London Times* piece describing the new Argentine Government as fascist, has caused an awful stink at the Casa Rosada.

There is considerable tuning to Radio Carmelo, a powerful near-by Uruguayan station. Rumors are rife that quite recently the announcer said: "Argentines, do not despair, friends are working to recover your freedom." The story is quite unfounded, I am sure, but the fact that it should spread shows that more Argentines feel their loss of freedom than appears on the surface. So many *Argentino*

comedians have been banned from the air, or forced to modify their style of scripting, that jesting suggestions have been made that Radio Carmelo should become the "Station of the Exiles" and that a mass exodus across the Rio de la Plata would at least ensure Argentine listeners being able to pick up their favorite radio programs once more.

(Later)

Always get a touch of homesickness when I tune in short-wave and hear one of F.D.R.'s fireside chats, although his broadcast last night on Musso's fall had plenty of fire. Imagine he wasn't sitting before any comfortable *chimenea*. Wish apartments in Buenos Aires had a bit more heating. Due to fuel conservation, we are getting just enough steam in the pipes to take the chill off. These concrete buildings are positive icebergs in winter. But to return to F.D.R. . . . Heard Radio Splendid follow-up with a recording of his speech, about half an hour after we had tuned in on short-wave. Whenever the really fiery parts were reached, the station had to fade them out. Wondered whether this was by official order, and this morning I was told the station was so nervous about relaying, in view of instructions not to comment on the Balcony Benito's fall, that they decided to record first—just in case. As some parts of the speech were outspoken about dictators, the station checked with the radio communications people, and were told that they must fade those passages out! How would that sound in United States headlines: ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT BLACKS OUT PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT?

JULY 30th

This from a special magazine piece: For years, the one place to which every really knowing visitor to Argentina has headed as soon as possible after unstrapping himself from the plane seat or clambering down the gangplank was not a vast *pampa* estate, a historic monument, or an impressive Embassy, but a simple, unadorned house on Calle Guido. There, if he had an introduction, and often even if he hadn't, he would talk to Senorita Maria Rosa—Maria Rosa

Oliver. John Gunther and Jock Whitney, Waldo Frank and Doug Fairbanks, Jr., and many an Ambassador, good-will or diplomatic, found his way to the bright, gay book-filled room that was her *salon*. No visitor who ever crossed verbal rapiers with Maria Rosa ever came away poorer. Although crippled for years by infantile paralysis, unable to move without the aid of a nurse, she has traveled as much and seen more than most of her fellow countrymen. And her mind, like that of F.D.R.'s, whom she admires, has covered every field of interest from politics to poetry. I, and many another newspaperman, have come to this small, dark-haired writer as if she were a modern oracle. A year ago, the energetic office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs finally asked her to clipper to Washington. Officially it was to lecture to *norteamericano* audiences, but privately it was so that such men as Vice-President Wallace, Nelson Rockefeller and other high-ranking officials concerned with Latin-American affairs might get her advice firsthand.

One of the few women ever invited for such a purpose, 100 per cent pro-democratic but yet, because of her family and background, understanding the conservative, *estancia*-owning Argentine point of view, she's been invaluable in eliminating misunderstanding; in pointing out the practical way to better relations between the two hemisphere countries that remain farthest apart. The other afternoon I had tea with her. We talked about things she had seen during her ten months in the States, and I asked some questions. Hemisphere understanding, one soon learns from Maria Rosa, has to be more than a one-way proposition. Too many Yankees still feel it is simply a question of Latin Americans understanding *them*.

But how well do *norteamericanos* understand their Good Neighbors? Maria Rosa found plenty of misconceptions about the lands south of the border in *los Estados Unidos*. As a kind of good-will Ambassador in reverse, she did her best to unscramble some of the worst. But, says she, the following six points, if clarified in the minds of people in the United States, would do much to promote that hemisphere solidarity which is so important a part of President Roosevelt's policy.

1) *Latin America is all one big country*. Yes, North Americans know to some little extent that Argentina is one place and Guatemala an-

other, but the average United States knowledge of Latin geography is still as cockeyed as Hitler's conception of the Four Freedoms. There is comparatively little understanding in the United States about individual Latin countries as such. The fact that each fought its own war of independence, that their histories and ideals are similar in many ways to those of the States, would, if properly understood, create a firm and solid bridge between the Americas.

2) *They think Latin America is romantic.* Most Yankees somehow have an idea that everything south of the border looks like a Southern California reconstruction of a Spanish colonial village, complete with half moon, soft breezes and Dorothy Lamour palms. Gay *caballeros*, some plunking guitars, and dark-eyed *senoritas* are, in the minds of many, the principal population of Latin America. Maria Rosa doesn't take this Carmen Miranda fixation quite as seriously as some Latin Americans. She feels that impressionable Yanks have made Latin America a dream-world land of passion because they, and especially Hollywood, simply need romance. But a realistic approach is required if hemisphere solidarity is to become genuine.

3) *Latin America isn't wide open.* There is still a great feeling in the United States that adventurers, promotion men and any kind of ambitious college graduate only needs a plane ticket south to find a gold mine or at least a terrific sales territory wide open and marked: "Come and take it." Maria Rosa has tried to warn that the gold-rush days are over and that any ideas about exploitation and cheap labor don't go down well in Latin America now and will go down even less well after the war. We must work together, she adds, to raise the standards of the average man in both Americas.

4) *The Indian story.* Because most North Americans know Mexico (which has a comparatively large Indian population) best of all Latin Republics, they often assume all countries are chock-full of native tribes holding ceremonial dances in the central plazas. There are mixed races in Latin America, Maria Rosa has pointed out, just as in the United States, and every country has sought to fuse its own elements to produce the highest result. But understanding that the level of civilization—even if not the standard of living—is just as high south of the border as north, will encourage mutual respect and understanding.

5) *Is Argentina Nazi?* Maria Rosa had difficulty explaining this im-

portant question. She was in the States both before and after the overthrow of the Castillo Government. While thoroughly pro-democratic, she has had to explain that her people, even though by and large they share the pro-democratic attitude, cannot be blamed entirely for holding off in the same way the majority of the United States people did in the isolationist pre-Pearl Harbor days. Castillo, she explained, was not a Nazi but a provincial who couldn't see farther than the borders of his own country. To the new Government, her attitude is: It is too early to comment (especially on the record).

6) *United States newspapers and Latin America.* Maria Rosa had nothing but praise for leading United States newspapers which she said were doing an excellent job in reporting Latin America. In many cases, because they don't have the censorship limitations, United States papers print far more interpretive news about Latin America than papers in the countries where the news takes place. Once-over-lightly journalists who have rushed through Latin America and then returned to "tell all" have often given an out-of-shape picture, she says, but even so she finds some consolation in the fact that they've helped arouse interest, which many readers have made the prefix to further study of Latin America.

JULY 31st (Montevideo)

Over here today to get the first annual report of the Emergency Advisory Committee for the Political Defense of the Hemisphere. It shows that a lot has been accomplished, but the most important point, I think, is its stress on the fact that neither the Committee's work, nor the United Nations victories have erased the dangers of political aggression here in the Americas. Many people in the States somehow had the notion that no sooner did the Latin-American nations break with the Axis than all—or at least most—Axis activities would stop. Uruguayan Vice-President Guani, who presides over the Committee, emphasized the Axis is still going strong. Argentina, although not mentioned by name, is indirectly cited and the report explains that her failure to co-operate represents a dangerous gap in

the hemisphere armor. Incidentally, the report is signed and approved by all delegates including Buenos Aires' Guillermo Achaval, who came in just in time to participate in the meeting accepting the document.

This Montevideo Committee and its job is especially interesting because of its work in introducing a new concept in international relations—a partial cession of each country's sovereign rights so that seven nations represent twenty-one. The Committee is also trail-blazing for post-war relations in the sense that its representatives are empowered to visit individual nations, examine their adherence to "general principles and minimum standards" recommended in every resolution which the Committee has passed, and suggest steps which each should take. This is the sort of development which the League of Nations was never able to carry out, but it seems to have worked successfully in this hemisphere, with the notable exception of Argentina.

Even at that, Argentina is always insisting she does comply. Delegates of the Committee are now up in the States, in fact, to discuss problems with our own Government and others are constantly on the move. The Committee is following the technique of consultative meetings with one or more governments, sitting down around a table with them and trying to iron out details right on the spot. The permanent headquarters in Montevideo are always open and I think the group has made special progress in completely disregarding the formalism of most international bodies. While one of the least-publicized agencies of Pan-American action, the Committee is one of its most effective.

AUGUST 1st

Chances of an Argentine break with the Axis are practically nil. This directly from Admiral Storni, but his name can't be whispered. He saw some of the foreign correspondents yesterday and gave them a non-quotable yarn, which they were allowed to file as a "good source" piece. Some of Storni's psychology certainly seems strange. I wonder how much support he has from within the Government

itself. His off-the-record explanation was that Germany's rapid "deterioration" and the anticipated early elimination of Italy from the war have virtually ended all prospects for an Argentine break with the Axis unless there is some "unexpected development," such as an attack on Argentine soil or shipping. Argentina, as Storni put it, considers it "unfitting national dignity to kick Italy when she is down and out." The same reasoning—still according to Storni—applies to Germany, whose fall, he said, is "regarded as merely a matter of months." No mention of Japan, but we got the impression that any plans being cooked up in that respect are also dead.

Storni tried to justify the fact that Army officialdom feels a break in relations would have little value to the Allies since Argentina "is enforcing measures to suppress Axis espionage." Presenting a united Pan-American front is apparently regarded by the Army as "simply a symbolic gesture." Storni insisted the Government and the people fully adhere to the Pan-American idea. Failure to break should therefore not be considered a repudiation of Washington's policy. But United States insistence on rupture might create an unfortunate impression that Argentina had been coerced into taking the step. Apparently the idea of a break isn't even being talked about by the inner circle any more, although the public still argues until far into the night.

I've heard a story from several sources that there is a Machiavellian plan afoot to force the Nazis to provide the kind of excuse Argentina would require in order to break. This yarn says the Government is really hoping an Argentine ship will be sunk by a German U-boat. One more vessel added to the two already sunk could be whooped up as an act calling for action and be less worrisome than the loss of prestige which would accompany an otherwise over-tardy side-changing. A great scheme—all they have to do is to persuade Berlin.

News comes from Washington today that the Board of Economic Warfare is henceforth to control all shipments to Argentina at the destination rather than at the source. This is one of those items that seems like daily routine until you dig. If effective, it's going to make operations for the Axis side more and more difficult. Consignee control it is called—a program mutually worked out by the State Department, the B.E.W. and officials of Argentina's Banco Central, who are the most pro-democratic of the official hierarchy. Previously,

local recommendations on who should be allowed to get what were so frequently ignored by Henry Wallace's organization that serious difficulties were created and big holes punched in our economic warfare program. A discouragingly large share of exports consigned to unknown importers and speculators, for example, went into the *Mercado Negro* and often to blacklisted firms unable to purchase from the States through normal channels. The nationalists are already screaming that the new system—which has necessitated cancellation of some licenses recently granted—means economic sanctions against a friendly country. Both the Banco Central and our Embassy, however, are equally pleased with the move; they feel that it will be effective and develop better co-operation. If these steps stem, or even cut down the amount of United States goods coming down to profiteering speculators here it will be worth while all round.

AUGUST 2nd

Have been talking to some people familiar with the local publishing set-up and find them increasingly fearful of the effects the new Government's regulations may have on the tremendous concentration of Spanish language publishing in Buenos Aires. This is undoubtedly the world capital of *castellano* publishing right now, and book burnings are no joke. Argentina, a country of less than fourteen millions, has approximately ninety *editoriales* (publishing houses)—an amazing figure contrasted with the approximately 250 in the United States. Since these houses not only have tremendous circulation in Argentina, but dominate practically all Latin America, anything limiting freedom of expression shows up immediately in what they dare to print. As a result, many publishers in Argentina are not issuing really strong material against the Axis, or daring overtly pro-democratic works, particularly translations of United States books.

Many of the famous presses of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia have migrated here, bringing their writers, technicians and organizations. The catalogs of these houses have grown by leaps and bounds. Yet an increasing number of these publishers—some of whom

crossed the Atlantic to escape totalitarianism—have felt themselves bound by Argentina's gags. As a result, Mexican, Chilean, Cuban and other Latin book-publishing firms have made considerable progress in fields where those established in Argentina have feared to tread.

The United States book industry has been eyeing this territory with increased interest of late, and the assistance of Nelson Rockefeller's office has helped smooth out hurdles previously blocking translations for Latin America. At the recent *Primera Feria del Libro*, Argentina's book fair, I especially noticed that United States translations dominated the foreign field formerly headed by French, German, Italian and other European countries. The fact that many Axis nations are doing comparatively little these days that is of much interest to the outside world, is one reason for this shift. But my literary friends say that even more important is the way Latin Americans have become more interested in us and the facilities which have been afforded those desirous of doing translations. This is smart propagandizing. Five important United States publishing executives representing more than 200 leading publishing firms are now in town under the sponsorship of the Co-ordinator and our State Department. They told me they are particularly interested in spotting the kinks hampering book interchange. Latin publishing, especially here, is far above their expectations. They have also noted that prices of many United States books are almost prohibitive for students, teachers and others interested in the Original English versions.

AUGUST 3rd

Despite plain-spoken warnings that such efforts would be firmly suppressed, the radio broadcasting people are attempting to unite in some kind of movement to protest and modify the new Nazi-like control measures now binding them with increasing severity. Never able to get together previously, they've finally taken the plunge in desperation, feeling there's little left that can be done to them anyhow. Whatever the risk, they realize it is better to make some concerted attempt if not exactly at resistance, at least to get relief.

Arguments used by United States broadcasters to battle Federal control in the States, and to prove such control acts against public interest, are being lined up. What is happening here, however, makes United States control a picnic. I've seen some of the daily flow of decrees, and it looks to me as if the Government is out to convert radio into one vast propaganda machine for itself. What worries broadcasters is that they are now dependent on the good- or ill-will of the military. A flock of censors have been named, the majority of them relatives of the new radio communications directors. Scripts for broadcast must all be approved, and often they are *mislaid* or rejected by one minor official only to be okayed by another. Some of these employees are already on to the idea that quite a nice little supplementary income can be earned as "locators." The fact that so many relatives of the powers-that-be have been appointed to the control department, proves the new crowd are not so pure in motive and high patriotic purpose as they would like to have everybody believe. Engineer Adolfo T. Consentino, former Radio Communications Director, has been subjected to a prolonged third degree by the new authorities who have it in for him because they felt he balked their plans under the Castillo regime. They have been diligently investigating his entire administration of radio affairs, trying to find something, so far unsuccessfully. Consentino seemingly was that rarity, a capable and honest official.

The broadcasters are particularly miffed because the papers are lauding all measures to control radio, with what seems to be pitiful short-sightedness. What the dailies haven't seemed to realize is that curtailment of radio freedom is just the start. Once measures begin against freedom of the press, it will be too late.

The official dislike of radio quiz programs seems to stem from the fear of a counter-revolutionary movement. I'm told they are afraid that an order to strike could so easily be given by radio through some participant in a quiz show. The same fear (once depicted in a Hollywood movie) influenced the ban on continuance of broadcasts from auditoriums. (Official excuse is a complaint lodged a number of years back by the Authors' Rights Society, alleging free radio shows competed unfairly with the theatre, thus creating unemployment. The complaint was so old the authors had forgotten all about it. Many would now dearly like to recall it.)

When the regulations governing grammatical and language questions first came out, a number of comedians tried poking sly fun. Reprisals were so swift and menacing they soon had to be abandoned. Theatres have also had to eliminate all satirical political skits, long one of the brightest features of Buenos Aires' Broadway. One of the most eminent of local musicians talking about the *orden* calling on all stations to include the greatest possible number of Argentine musical compositions in their programs told me he said: "Sure, I'll play all the Argentine music there is, but at the end of one day, I'll have got through the lot, and then next day I'll have to begin all over again." The nightly broadcast of the official news bulletin at 8:30 is already known as "The Hour of Silence." There are some arguments as to whether anyone listens at all. Some say a great many people tune in through fear— "They want to know where the ax is going to fall next." Most broadcasters say listeners dial out as soon as they hear the military march which heralds the *chorizo* (long sausage), the name by which the official bulletin is dubbed. Broadcasters have suggested editing the bulletin to make it more interesting, but the military insists on its being drafted and read in the style of an official order-of-the-day. Some wags forecast: "The bulletin is so dull that one of these days the announcer reading it will fall over his script, snoring happily."

AUGUST 4th

Is there going to be a tightening of United States policy toward Argentina? Ambassador Armour is going up to the States in a few days, to "report on developments" and there is already plenty of talk that it is the first step toward some kind of a crack-down. Other things help confirm this.

Despite all the denials that any economic sanctions were involved in the decision to hold up export licenses for shipments of United States goods to Argentina, lots of people think that Washington's patience is beginning to be exhausted and that the south-bound flow of much-needed goods might be slowed down. Since agricultural Argentina lives on foreign trade and is strongly dependent on continued imports of certain machinery, goods and materials, any cur-

tailment might produce a crisis hard to withstand. The volume of Argentine imports for the first semester of this year is already 39 percent less than last year. Putting that on a cash basis means a slump from two hundred and forty-nine million pesos to one hundred and seven millions, which is some dip for anybody's graph.

The Administration announced today that Argentine ships will be allowed to call at United States Eastern coast ports, even though it means braving the Nazi blockade which neutrals were ordered to stay away from in June, 1942. Reason for the change isn't known yet, but exporters say Argentina apparently is hard up for goods because many of the things Argentina needs just can't be shipped to New Orleans, the only United States port where her vessels now ordinarily call. *Noticias Graficas*, lone Buenos Aires paper to go beyond mere publication of the official communiqué, says this afternoon that sending vessels directly to New York will enable Argentina to sell more products at cheaper prices than those of the United States market, through elimination of rail freight charges from New Orleans to Eastern centers, or, in other words, that business alone motivates Argentina's changed plans. But suppose Washington decides there's "nothing left to sell Argentina" at any port. Well, some pro-democratic Argentines say that might not be a bad idea. These people don't want anything that smacks of a big stick or sending Marines, any more than does F.D.R., but they do feel that just as the policy of appeasing Franco in Spain and Hitler at Munich helped the growth of fascist power, so may the none-of-our business attitude allow totalitarianism to flourish in this hemisphere. The policy of actively aiding those Latin-American countries participating in the war effort, especially Brazil and Mexico, to the fullest, while bypassing the others, is not new. But the fact that some Argentines are hoping for measures to bring about what they seem powerless to achieve themselves, is news.

AUGUST 5th

New detailed rules for running the provinces are issued today. Living here in Buenos Aires you're apt to forget what goes on in the rest of the country, but not so this Government. They're particularly

preoccupied with the provinces and the *provincianos*; the majority are *provincianos* themselves. The latest ukase advises Interventors on the best methods of running internal politics in their States, and, it seems, how to wind themselves up in more yards of red-tape. Everything must be done by rule.

Irish-faced and Irish-named General Farrell, the Minister of War, who doesn't speak a word of English, called in a few Argentine newspapermen the other day and gave them an inside hush-hush tale of why Argentina "could not" break with the Axis or accept Lend-Lease help from the States. The version I got is second-hand, but it checks with plenty of other details leaking out in the past. Most enlightening is officialdom's blind, obstinate belief that accepting tanks, planes and guns from the States and co-operating on hemisphere defense would somehow mean "selling out" and give us Yanks a military foothold in Argentina. Farrell insisted that Brazil—despite all the material she has received—"can't move a ship from one dock to another without a United States O.K." Apparently the Army is convinced that they would be subjected to United States orders on how to run their own general staff, or their own country as a condition for getting armaments. Argentina, he disclosed, had "tried to buy North American armaments, on a cash basis," but the United States refused; proof, according to Farrell, that there is more than meets the eye in *norteamericano* assistance to her good neighbors.

In line with the same report comes this: About a fortnight ago an angry committee of colonels and generals called on Ramírez and told him that they "wouldn't be responsible" if he severed Axis relations. Soon afterward he was visited by another group, including Rawson, former War Minister Tonazzi and General Jorge Giovanelli. They favored a break. So Ramírez was on a see-saw. The non-rupture clique must have been successful, for possibilities of severance seem to be lessening.

AUGUST 9th

Some more good dope on last month's closing of the pro-democratic Junta de la Victoria. During the Castillo Administration, the Junta

was constantly in hot water; permission to open would be obtained from the Ministry of the Interior and the cops would subsequently bar members from their building. The Junta would then appeal to Minister Culaciatti and he would more or less smooth things out. But it all meant that every session was fraught with excitement and an atmosphere of bad feeling prevailed all around. Apparently the fact that the Junta openly announced a great part of the fruit of its labors was sent to Russia assured it the hostility of the Church, the police and those higher up.

It seems hard to believe that some of the chic ladies who were responsible for the foundation and organization of the Junta could be communists—if they were, then communism in Argentina seems to have first taken a turn through the Rue de la Paix. The organization had united a very large section of the women of the country and, to judge from the work finished, the ladies definitely were not idle. Certainly it was moving to see the little working girls, after their many hours in factory *taller*, or behind a shop counter, trotting in to the Junta to fetch wool for knitting mufflers, or turning in the finished work, over which they had obviously sat for long hours. And it is tragic to think this has gone for nothing, because everything has been confiscated lock, stock and barrel. On the night of the raid the Committee had left the premises some time earlier. The secretary received a telephone call reporting police arrivals with trucks. They started carting everything away. The Committee rushed to the scene and a bitter altercation ensued, but to no avail. The cops had their orders. The girls managed in some way to smuggle out their book-keeping ledgers, which they had always had posted and kept up to date (under the supervision of one of the most reputable firms of chartered accountants to prevent graft charges). Subsequently the authorities demanded the accounts. There was no recourse but to comply, not however, before photostat copies were made of everything—just to be on the safe side. The last item in the books when they were handed over to the police showed a sum of pesos for “photographing ledgers,” so the police were left in no doubt on that score—and thus warned against making false entries on their own. Notwithstanding all the influence brought to bear, the Junta has been unable to get any satisfaction from the authorities.

The young nationalists are delirious with joy over the closing.

They declare it was a "disgrace that these stupid women should have been sending so much material out of the country, when they might have given a thought for the thousands of barefoot Argentine school-children who needed their help."

AUGUST 11th

Full, detailed instructions on how to get rid of communists, or anybody even mildly suspected of Red tendencies, issued today by the Interior Ministry to the Federal Interventors in charge of Argentina's fourteen provinces, sound like Colonel McCormick or Mrs. Elizabeth (Red Network) Dilling. Colonel Gilbert told the Interventors—all high Army and Navy officers—to proceed with redoubled vigor to stamp out communism, which, he asserted, had "infiltrated into all trade unions, all classes and all circles." Said the order: "Not only are you to proceed directly against all organizations even vaguely suspected of communist affiliation, but arrest all communist leaders and their principal followers, gather all possible information about their connections, however distant."

In other words, anyone who had even casual contacts with any person suspected of communism is likely to find himself in trouble with the authorities. The regime seems to have a Dies Committee mentality, with a lot more power. Unlike Dies, who, in general, merely threw mud at those he accused, the Argentine Red hunt is far more serious. Since communism is outlawed, habeas-corpus proceedings don't apply to those arrested as Reds, and I, with many Argentine newsmen, know hundreds of suspects have been sent to concentration camps in Neuquen and the extreme South of Patagonia, without trial or even knowing the charges against them.

It is impossible to discover how many have been arrested, but I've been able to check these facts pretty well.

Up in Rosario, preceding General Ramírez' recent visit to Argentina's second city, the headquarters of sixteen suspect unions were closed by authorities, apparently anticipating today's instructions.

Eighty-five Chilean deputies have addressed Ramírez petitioning for the release of Vittorio Codovilla, a leading anti-fascist, whom

the Government accuses of the usual charge. The National Miners' Federation of Chile, which claims to represent 70,000 members, has also petitioned. Among others arrested are Rodolfo Ghioldi, J. José Riel, Benito Marianitti, José Peter and Julio Notta, a physician prominent in university circles. All the others are active in labor groups or in anti-fascist organizations; not all are definitely communist. Eduardo Arrojo, a Radical Party deputy in the Chamber of Deputies dissolved by the Ramírez Government, has been under arrest for more than ten days, held incommunicado. Arrojo had been entrusted by the Radical Party with the task of obtaining the support of the General Confederation of Labor to the proposed political union to oppose Patron Costas.

Emilio Troisi, a wealthy business man suspected of Red tendencies, was held incommunicado, released, then re-arrested despite the fact that after his first detention Uruguayan President Amézagá personally telephoned Ramírez and obtained his release under custody of an attaché of the Uruguayan Embassy.

Apparently Gilbert, who is strongly anti-Semitic, is chief Red baiter. His power has been strengthened by his control of the National Gendarmerie, which has just taken over the policing of the workers' suburbs of Avellaneda and Quilmes, superseding local officers. The "Social Order Division" of the police in Buenos Aires has also been reinforced by the addition of new Red-hunting personnel.

Another move to closer control of individual action is the announcement today that all adult male Argentines must register before October 31st and keep police advised of any changes in address or status immediately thereafter. Army enrollment books which all Argentines are issued under the conscription system, must be carried at all times. No one will be able to get far without registration because banks, stores and Government offices, etc., must demand to see them before doing business. We foreigners will have to carry passports or other official identification at all times. This has brought out a new crop of jokes about Ramírez' speech in Rosario last Sunday, wherein he described liberty as "something too precious to lose." Optimists, with which Argentina seems to abound, point out these measures are being taken with a view to getting everything ready for really honest elections. Under previous regimes, enroll-

ment books, which had to be registered before voting, were usually confiscated just before balloting time. The official party would use them to vote the "right way."

General Rawson, who since he led the June 4th coup has been a thorn in the side of the colonels (they suspect him of nursing ambitions to oust their puppet Ramírez), is finally to be kicked upstairs and out of the country. He is to give up his troop command and leave on an official mission, probably as Ambassador to Brazil. Seemingly the "ins" think he will be able to exert little direct influence from there.

Every day I hear more tales of trains loaded with persons summarily arrested without trial, departing with alleged communists headed for Neuquen and Tierra del Fuego concentration camps. To avoid attracting attention, the prisoners are loaded early in the morning at Southern suburban stations like Temperley and Lomas. Machine gunners are posted on the roof of each car in case somebody should try a "rescue attempt."

AUGUST 14th

Jail sentences are demanded for Axis spies, but the demand is more a pat than a sock in the jaw. Federal Attorney Belisario Gache Piran yesterday appeared before Federal Judge Dr. Fox. He submitted his findings in the case brought against the six spies working under the orders of the former German Naval Attaché Niebuhr. He asked sentences of three years for Ottomar Muller, two years each on Martin Schneider, Johann Napp and Walter Freiwald, and one year each for Lothar von Reichenbach and Helvezio Orтели, on the grounds that they worked as spies and on sabotage schemes. Gache Piran weakly admitted what everybody knows—that the sextet "jeopardized national peace and security." Most important, he said, in effect, that spy-boss Niebuhr was similarly occupied, although obviously no action was possible because he took refuge under his diplomatic immunity and refused to stand trial last March. The sentences demanded against these six are hardly severe. Despite confessions, they've all been out on low bail of approximately five hundred dol-

lars each. Even now some time will have to pass before they're finally sentenced, for under Argentine law judges must examine the case from A to Z before giving a verdict.

Buenos Aires' municipally owned Teatro Colon, one of the world's really top opera institutions, has been ordered intervened by General Pertiné, the pro-Nazi Military Mayor. Dr. Joaquin S. Anchorena, socialite President, and Senora Magdalena Bengolea de Sanchez Elia, Vice-President, have already resigned. Colonel Abelardo Vedaro is to run the Colon in future, "making all necessary reforms to improve performances and solving financial difficulties." The Colon has for years been a fascist hangout and United States stars have always had such a difficult time there that it is hard to discover any bouquets to toss at the previous administration, particularly Cirilo Grassi Diaz. Recently, because of the war, more and more Yanks have been employed and *Pampero* has been battling them. There is every possibility new rules will now be applied, imposing a percentage limit on foreign singers, instrumentalists, etc.

There was some protesting last year when the Colon presented *Elektra*, by Richard Strauss, the one great composer who has supported the Nazi regime. To the protests, the Colon management replied: "Music knows no frontiers." When it came to performing Shostakovich's *Seventh Symphony*, however, it was another story—the frontiers this time were very real and menacing.

AUGUST 15th

Many Argentines this week are beginning to realize for the first time what is being said about them in the States and in the free world outside their borders, and they have been shocked and surprised. The curtain has been lifted—only slightly, it's true—as a result of a protest made by Dr. Felipe Espil, Argentina's Ambassador in Washington. Espil conferred with Sumner Welles, not to protest (as he is familiar with the United States tradition of allowing the press to say what it pleases) but in order to put on record the fact that he thought some of the recent United States press criticism of Argentina was "unfair." Local papers, which haven't been allowed

to print any of the unfavorable cracks were given the green light to carry the full text of Espil's statement, which denied Argentina had failed to comply with her inter-American pledges. Espil, who, I understand, isn't too happy about the present setup, apparently had no other recourse but to complain. Press censor Colonel Hector Ladvoat has been getting more and more bitterly worded clippings from the United States papers, the latest a hot editorial in the *Washington Post*. I've seen some of these articles passed around by Argentine friends. They are heartsick at the fact that they believe people in the States feel the official policy to be their policy.

The only time press articles from outside can be printed here is when they are favorable. Thus, the people have no way of knowing the world's reaction, except from short-wave radio, to which few listen, or from the long-delayed United States papers which come down by slow boat mail and are read by very few Argentines. Some Argentines who do get foreign reaction are indignant; they lose sympathy with the United Nations. The great majority, however, are simply unaware of how their liberties are being curtailed. They don't really know or feel that radio programs are subject to censorship, that observers are posted in all newspaper offices to ensure that nothing contrary to the official policy gets published, or that many citizens have been arrested without trial. The sinister undercurrent flows through placid Argentine waters unknown to the swimmers gaily disporting themselves in the waters.

Cabildo today bestowed the first kind words in its two-year history upon Ambassador Espil, as a result of his criticism of the North American press. Editorializing, they said: "The moment has arrived for plain speaking. Because of his marriage to a lady from high society of the Washington governing class, Espil finds himself inhibited in the discharge of his diplomatic duties. Our Embassy in Washington is a kind of frigidaire in which the vital interests of our country congeal. Today it had to come. Our Ambassador in Washington at last acts in accord with his high, honorable investiture: to defend the honor of the nation." A kind of back-handed compliment that may precede a Naziphile campaign to recall Espil from Washington.

The fun waxes fast and furious under this gray-cloaked, booted-and-spurred Government, but you need the right sense of humor.

In the last week or so greatest excitement has revolved around the three-ring investigation into the affairs of Chadopyf, the transport combine which runs those wonderful tile-lined Spanish-built subways which so enchant recent arrivals. The Count of Guadalhorce, Chadopyf's chief promoter and a widely known Falangist, has been in and out of jail, subjected to repeated cross-questionings and thoroughly once-overed. Guadalhorce was the original protector in Argentina of Alfredo Cabanillas, editor of Ramon Castillo, Jr.'s, *Diario Español*. Cabanillas (Spanish Republicans here always call him Caganillas; ask an intimate Spanish friend why) was a member of the fifth column in Madrid during the Spanish War, where he edited *Heraldo de Madrid*, a Republican paper. He fled Spain in 1937, arriving in Buenos Aires broke and jittery. Guadalhorce supplied him with funds and got him the job on the local Falangist rag. The books and papers of Maura and Coll, a subsidiary or holding company, were ordered confiscated by Judge Ocampo. He later countermanded the order, but did not trouble to inform the press and radio. The result was the suspension of Radio El Mundo, Argentina's top broadcasting station for six hours for carrying the confiscation story.

AUGUST 17th

General Rawson has been protesting loudly to his friends that the colonels may want to get him out of the country and will make a Brazilian Ambassadorial Mission the excuse, but that *he* has no intention of going. However, the Foreign Office announced his appointment tonight, so apparently the blustering cavalryman is being sent on his way, willy-nilly. It is generally felt Rawson is no diplomat, and that the Brazilians—who are among the world's most wily and subtle diplomats—will just dance rings round him. As one Argentinian said: "Wait until Rawson gets into his cups and has a row with Vargas, then Argentina and Brazil will really go after each other."

The optimists are now hoping that once in Rio, Rawson will find a way to organize a counter-revolution from there.

An important interview with Storni on the question of opening Argentina's gates to refugees from Hitler. He says the Government is fully aware of the problem, but that while it wants to encourage immigration it will be necessary to "control its quality" from public health and economic points of view. "We shall particularly encourage young immigrants willing to establish themselves in the country. We shall seek to avoid the utterly destitute and the aged, in favor of the young and strong." More important, however, is what he says off-the-record, or merely hints: Banning of those holding disruptive political opinions or those whose religion might make them undesirable—in other words, Jews.

Papers like *La Prensa*, *La Nacion* and *Mundo* have recently been giving a lot of attention to the refugee problem. They point out Argentina's population is small in contrast to its potentialities; insist what the country needs is to open its doors and bring in the kind of people who helped develop it in the first place. My fear is that not only in Argentina but elsewhere in Latin America, an increasingly bitter, Nazi-fomented tide of anti-Semitism has all but killed all chances of any large-scale plan for present and post-war immigration. Leaders of both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations who, for the past two years have been developing methods whereby some of the millions of those dispossessed by Hitler might find new homes on this continent are beginning to despair, now that the campaign of deliberately fostered racial prejudice noticeable in the last six months has made chances slimmer instead of better. This, notwithstanding United Nations victories. Especially is it true in the leading Latin-American Republics—rich, pregnant-with-possibilities Brazil, which has less than 100,000 Jews out of a population of 46,000,000, and Argentina, which has about 400,000 Jews out of a total of thirteen millions. To a lesser extent in Peru, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela—and it is all the more sickening because until the Nazis started working, there existed far less anti-Semitism in Latin America than possibly any other part of the world. Fact that Brazil and Argentina are two of the five members of the Executive Committee of the Permanent Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, now meeting in London—the others are the Netherlands, Britain and the

States—is especially important, since it is up to them to make recommendations on which the democracies' and neutrals' future policy regarding refugees is to be based. Failure of the closed-door Anglo-American Bermuda refugee conference last April to reach any definite stand or let the hemisphere in on its talks, and the conference's refusal to admit many of the countries most likely to offer asylum to refugees has also given the Nazis an opening to inculcate into Latin America the poison that opening gates will mean admission of hordes of international undesirables.

I have talked to some people who have been studying this problem. They found that even in those Latin-American countries at war with the Axis there is an increasing propaganda to the effect that newcomers would merely rob localities of their rightful positions and jobs. True, the behavior of some recent German refugees in Latin America hasn't been of the best. Up in Bolivia many Jews were admitted as agriculturalists, and nationalists there are claiming that instead of going out to the farms they have entered business in competition with Bolivians. Yet Bolivian Consuls in Europe sold visas for the highest price that they could obtain, caring little about the fact that refugees to whom they were sold weren't farmers and had no intention of being farmers. The whole subject, like the Nazi promotion of racial issues, is shot full of hypocrisy.

AUGUST 20th

Argentina's decision last week to ignore the Axis blockade which has kept the State Merchant Fleet from sailing to New York, begins to look less and less like defiance of Berlin. Minister of Marine Sueyro announced today that merchant shipping is a service of public utility and that a board has been created to assign rates, fix freight rates and cargoes. He also let it be known that the decision to go to New York was primarily an economic gesture. Shipping to Manhattan will secure much higher freight rates than shipping to New Orleans.

The annual Cattle Show at the big, sprawling, Palermo Park opened today. If anybody doesn't think that's big news, he doesn't know Argentina. In this cattle-raising *pampa* country, meat holds the scepter, and meat on the hoof comes first. Ramírez and all the Cabinet Ministers turned out in full array this afternoon, driving up to the Sociedad Rural grounds in the customary coach-and-four, circling the ring and then taking their places in the Presidential stand. It seemed to me that enthusiasm, in the beginning at least, wasn't any too strong, certainly not as long or lusty as that at the ninth of July parade, or on any of Ramírez' recent trips to interior cities. The *estancia*-owning crowd seemingly don't like some of Ramírez' measures. But they were a little set back at the surprising news stage-managed to climax the *inauguración*.

First Dr. José Maria Bustillo, President of the Rural Society, got up and let go an indirect warning: The Sociedad looked with a doubtful eye on some of the recent Government measures interfering with free commercial enterprise. But he didn't know about the ace up the well-cut military sleeve. No sooner had Bustillo been handclapped to his seat, when up snapped General Diego Mason, Minister of Agriculture. Said he: "The Argentine Ambassador in London has just signed an agreement with the British Ministry of Food to purchase the entire exportable surplus of Argentine meat for two years, ending September 30, 1944." He added that for the first time since the Argentine and British Governments began negotiations on meat purchases, the agreement was a written document, the scope of which could be judged by the fact that it involved one and a half million tons of meat. The beef alone will require slaughtering an estimated six million steers. The *estancia* owners, who had been worrying for months because the previous verbal agreement had been dribbling along without renewal, let out a we-hit-the-jackpot whoop that could be heard in the Plaza Italia.

Talking to some *estancieros* afterward, and looking over tonight's papers, it is certainly apparent that most of the people got the impression that this was an Anglo-Argentine project. Actually the British Ministry of Food has merely been the agent of the United

Nations. *Noticias Graficas* was the only paper to talk about an "agreement with the Allies"; all the other headlines and editorials splashed: "Deal with the United Kingdom." The propaganda value to Britain was outlined most sharply in a post-show statement by Dr. Bustillo. He said: "It mustn't be forgotten that Britain has been Argentina's best customer and that the Argentine meat industry owes all its progress to Britain."

I understand that the actual agreement was signed a fortnight ago, but that the announcement was held up for the occasion. Truly Goebbels-like showmanship and timing.

AUGUST 22nd

The stories all of us sent up to the States about the swell meat-contract publicity received here by the English has brought a rush of strong statements from the States. It is pointed out that the agreement is similar to many others and that while none of the meat will be shipped to the States, United States soldiers in England will be among the principal consumers of the canned meats which Argentina will ship.

Argentina has certainly been worried during the past year at even the bare possibility that the United Nations might cease absorbing her meat in retaliation for the "prudent neutrality" policy. And now with the contract signed they are still saying, despite the Washington denials, that this proves England isn't so disturbed. The real reason the contract was finally concluded was that our side just can't get along without Argentina's meat. Feeding our soldiers is even more important than putting Argentina in her place.

AUGUST 23rd

Box-car loadings, the number of mink coats at the Opera, and the shares peddled on Wall Street on a busy day aren't half as good a

barometer of the financial situation as the Palermo cattle-show auction ring here. I went down to see the bidding on the champion bulls this morning, always a great treat, especially if you have someone as good as Don Roberto to go along and explain the finer points. "Syttiton Choice Baron," Grand Champion Shorthorn of the 57th Annual sold for forty-seven thousand pesos, approximately twelve thousand dollars. This is about seven dollars per pound on the hoof, highest price since 1925. The fact that the United Nations have agreed to purchase Argentina's entire exportable surplus, beginning retroactively as of October, 1942, apparently helped push up the prices.

AUGUST 24th

Franco's propaganda machine down here seems to be shifting into an increasingly pro-United Nations tone, but *El Caudillo* is still hedging his bets on the Axis. This sudden affection for the Allies apparently hasn't convinced most Latin-American Governments, or the public in general. The consensus I have rounded up here is that Franco is determined to obtain as much as possible from the United Nations and especially ourselves and the British, while paying the lowest possible price. The Falangist-controlled papers, especially in Argentina, Chile, Cuba and Venezuela, have been playing up the past week's urgent conference between Franco and British Ambassador Sir Samuel Hoare. But they have hesitated to draw the inferences taken by the pro-democratic dailies: That the meetings were to discuss the question of how much aid, particularly armaments, the Allies are prepared to give after Madrid's Axis ties were split and the Blue Division "volunteers" withdrawn from Russia. Franco's propagandists have begun featuring United Nations victories over Berlin and Rome dispatches. The local *Diario Español*, still headed by Ramon S. Castillo, Jr., son of the ex-President, is now even using the official British News Service. Many pro-democratic people here are afraid there is another appeasement deal on the *tapiz*.

Despite an impressive line-up of facts to the contrary, I think the impression is still prevalent throughout Latin America and in Argentina in particular that the States and England are in sharp disagreement on the vital question of Latin-American policy. Washington and London may be in perfect accord on such points as Argentina's Axis-aiding neutrality, on food purchases, on trade and post-war problems. Latin-American governments and informed people may know it, but what is important and increasingly dangerous to the United Nations is that the average Latin American doesn't—and that the Nazis, who are by no means inactive down here, even outside Argentina—are using incident after incident in their attempt to drive in a deeper and deeper wedge between the Allies. Last week's deal, whereby the British, via the world's largest meat contract, agreed to take Argentina's entire surplus, is a significant case in point. Actually, as Secretary Hull stated in Washington yesterday, the contract was concluded by a Combined Food Board, representing the United States and Britain. Also, as Hull explained, there is really no difference of opinion between the two countries on the main issue. But don't let anybody tell you that is the way the average Argentine understands it. To most people, the agreement constitutes a tacit British approval of Argentina's fence straddling. The papers here certainly played up the declarations made by Argentine Ambassador Carcano in London, that it took a neutral nation to first implement the Hot Springs Conference while forgetting the Argentine Foreign Office denial of political implications. Only down in the fine type could one discover any reference to the fact that the United States was even connected. Many have regarded it as another case of "the English buy from us, but Uncle Sam won't."

Many London and Buenos Aires correspondents have pointed out that the agreement assures Argentina of a permanent part in post-war economics and feeding projects; hence it is equivalent to Argentina's participation in the Hot Springs meeting. Argentina was purposely excluded, but those who are interested in playing up alleged disagreements between Anglo-American policies, say this country has been ushered in at the back door by London. As Secretary Hull states, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden last December

"deplored" Argentina's attitude in refusing to sever diplomatic relations with the enemies of the Allied Nations, but that point has never really made much impression. Many people consider London's stand and the round-about method of expressing it a mere wrist-slap. So many Argentines merely look you blankly in the face when this "deploring" of Argentina's neutrality stand is mentioned. They cannot seem to see any reason why they should be anything but neutral. They appear entirely unaware of the fact that usually Argentina's neutrality has not been benevolent toward the Allies, but quite the other way around. It has been suggested to me that what the Allies should do is to list the numbers of lives lost through Axis espionage, sabotage, etc., directed from Argentina, and all the petty persecution that has gone on for so long against pro-Allied entities, newspapers, radio stations, movies and so on. True, the since-disbanded Congressional Investigating Committee has published some of this, but there may have been too much of a party-political tinge about their presentation, detracting from its telling power. It's a job that has to be done.

AUGUST 28th

Although it will naturally be denied, today's move by the Government that no foreigner, whether a subject of a belligerent or neutral nation may take out citizenship papers until after the war is going to affect many thousands of refugees in this country. The explanatory announcement said, "Present circumstances require the authorities not only to take every step to assure the country's neutrality, but also to preserve internal order." Secondly, "It's obviously necessary to take steps to prevent the incorporation into the ranks of the nation's citizens of persons arriving from abroad, whose sincerity or loyalty may be doubted." Of course all this sounds reasonable at first sight, but I can't help suspecting if it isn't really motivated by anti-Semitic, anti-democratic policy. The Government says it has found many cases where citizenship papers had been sold by unscrupulous judges. Such papers already granted may now be cancelled if it is found that the holders are carrying out activities that

might endanger Argentine sovereignty; hold ideologies, principles, etc., contrary to Argentina's Constitution, or form of Government, or have given false information in order to obtain naturalization, etc.

The decree has hit Argentine parents of children born in neighboring countries, like Uruguay or Brazil, who never troubled to register them as Argentine subjects at birth, relying on their obtaining Argentine citizenship on coming of age. This is now impossible.

AUGUST 29th

For the past week the papers here have been devoting columns to the struggle within the United States State Department and the possibility that Sumner Welles may quit. It would amaze people in the United States to see how such things are followed here. Welles' resignation would cause a great impression and many of the Latin-American diplomatic people to whom I've been talking don't hesitate to say privately that his departure would be a severe loss to Pan-Americanism. He is especially remembered in Buenos Aires because he was at one time first Secretary of our Embassy. I have had requests from New York for a complete appraisal of Ambassador Armour's record, since he is rumored as a possible successor to Sumner Welles. Whether he goes to State or not, this is a good time to go over Armour's background and accomplishments, for around him much of United States-Argentine relations have centered.

A rich man's son, with a Saint Paul's, Princeton and Harvard Law School touch, Armour has always been the aristocratic type, but with an unusually broad understanding of world affairs and human rights, something like F.D.R.'s. Soft-spoken, his personal charm, kindly sense of humor and great store of patience are extremely impressive, (especially to Latins) and sometimes deceiving. A hard worker, a fairly good administrator, not overly social, he's no ivory-tower dweller, but neither has he had the tempering which politics and governorship gave Roosevelt.

No die-hard conservative, he has liberal ideas, ideals and concepts, somewhat to the left of the general State Department line of being "chosen by destiny to handle Uncle Sam's business abroad,"

but certainly he isn't as liberal as Wallace or the New Dealers. He has been called a deep-stream liberal, somewhat like Roosevelt basically, but without the political acumen or inclination to enter domestic policies, or to campaign either at home or abroad for burning issues or requirements. He has always been a traveling diplomat, which makes this kind of analysis difficult.

Comparison with Welles: No one could ever accuse Armour of having ice water instead of blood in his veins, as has been said of the Under-Secretary of State. Armour's is a far quieter personality. To date he has taken orders from Washington, rather than indicating what the home office should do. But I know he has frequently felt strongly about decisions that should be adopted vis-a-vis United States relations by those at the other end of the diplomatic cable. Still, he has never made any open or off-the-record complaints. We understand some of his proposals are still gathering dust in the State Department's pigeonholes, therefore he isn't to blame for some of the apparent inconsistencies in United States policies toward lone neutrality holdouts.

Attitude toward public opinion: Armour has always been especially sensitive to public opinion and has always stood in well with Argentines. I know he believes in letting the United States in on what's going on behind State Department policy. His personal relations with United States correspondents here and with the local press are of the best.

Standing with Roosevelt and Hull: Although Armour got his first ministerial post to Haiti under Hoover in 1932, it was F.D.R. who moved him up to Canada in 1935, thence to Chile in 1938 and to Buenos Aires in 1939. He has always been a strictly correct, instinctively do-the-right-thing career man. For years on foreign assignment since his first appointment to Vienna in 1912, he has always been apart from United States politics, or even State Department inter-mural rows. Professionalism and concentration on duty, as he has seen it, have always been his dominating practice.

Ideas on post-war world: Armour's record shows several factors likely to be highly important in his future career. He definitely feels peace, like war, must be won; he has stressed that the States must have greater responsibility for maintaining world peace by taking definite steps, although in this he is probably closer to Hull than

to Welles. He believes particularly in working with Britain toward these ends and one of his biggest, least-publicized jobs, is the manner in which the British in Argentina—largest group outside the Empire itself—have been moved closer to the North Americans. Also the way in which the joint co-operation, world policy of the United States and Britain have been brought to the attention of Latin Americans. Like Hull, Armour is a strong believer in the elimination of trade barriers and in the solution of international economic problems as a basis for world peace. Economics have always been one of his chief interests, and the 1941 Argentine-United States Trade Pact one of his most successful achievements.

Toward fascists, and especially the Latin-American variety: Armour's policy can be categorically described as not favoring any appeasement for appeasement's sake. On the other hand, he doesn't follow what he believes is simply pressure for pressure's sake. It is known that he has been frankly disappointed with the Ramírez Administration and has been let down by the unfulfilled "deeds-not-words" promises of Foreign Minister Storni. He doesn't hesitate to let Argentines know it. I know that many in the States think United States policy toward Argentina is weak, but it can be stated that Armour, following Washington's directive, has held to the line of economically supplying Argentina with only those strategic materials which will help us get what we need. For example: tin plate is still shipped to the River Plate because it is necessary to make cans to pack meat to feed Yankee and United Nations soldiers. And machinery is sent for mining enterprises because we require wolfram and other minerals which Argentina produces.

Important note: If Armour had any doubts previously about what Western-Hemisphere fascism might mean, his friends here think his experience with Castillo and now with Ramírez has convinced him of the danger. It is a tribute to his record that many Argentine liberals have counted on him as a friend and that, unlike some other United States ambassadors, he has never held with fascist-minded "ins" simply because they were in. The few steps which Castillo's Government took against the Nazis came mainly under the sting of Armour-guided United States finger-pointings and Armour's extremely discreet but nevertheless strong, velvet-glove, non-head-line-making, behind-scenes operations.

Another point: There's been plenty of strong pressure in trying to keep important Argentine firms off the blacklist. Armour's policy has always been to hold to the principle that anyone even indirectly aiding the enemy was an enemy of the United States—despite the fact that he might also be important to our diplomacy here. Of course some critics insist that despite these points and despite the admitted undesirability of interfering in affairs of the Latin-American Republics, the United States has still been too easy with Argentine fascism. But that's a question that sits right in Washington's lap.

AUGUST 31st

Once again the movies offer a tip-off as to the real, inner feelings of the new Military Government. Charles Laughton's picture *This Land Is Mine*, opened this week at the Rex. The way the blue-pencilers gave it a going over indicates more than all the high-flown speeches what the *militares* want the people to know and what they consider *verboten*. In the old days, censorship of Hollywood films here was a matter for the municipal authorities. Ever since Castillo, censorship has become more and more a Foreign Office question, with the Nazis always ready to demand elimination of everything they don't like. The Laughton film was held up several weeks and it has been released now with certain scenes cut and other sub-titles in Spanish blacked out. Strangely enough, the English dialogue continues merrily on in the background. For anyone who can *hablar el ingles*, the deletions are simply a grand joke. Even non-English-speaking audiences seem to have caught the idea. Whenever a black-out title appears they hoot and jeer.

The scenes that give the best indication of how the military feels are those that come when Laughton, as a weak namby-pamby schoolteacher who finally realizes democracy must be fought for, holds his last class under the Nazi occupation. Laughton strolls about the room with a book containing the declaration of the rights of man, written by Rousseau in 1790, and explains each point. The censors let the first articles get by, but as soon as Laughton began

speaking about the principle "that all sovereignty resides in the nation," and that "no group or individual can exercise authority which doesn't come from the people" the black line appears. Every other reference, direct or indirect, which Laughton or any other character makes to dictatorships or their kind of government has been slashed out. The film boys tell me newsreels have been badly cut when they say anything against Hitler or Mussolini, even when such references occur in speeches by F.D.R.

SEPTEMBER 1st

Argentina isn't the only Latin-American country having troubles. In Bolivia the whole Cabinet unexpectedly resigned a few nights ago following the Chamber of Deputies' questioning of the Minister of Mines. The quiz was in connection with recent rioting in the big Catavi tin-mining district, where nineteen were killed. President Peñaranda's opposition, including many nationalists similar to the Nazi pals here, screamed his Administration was entirely responsible for the riot. Government speakers replied with the charge that the opposition was "playing into the hands of the Chilean and Soviet communists," who, they said, had organized the strike leading to the rioting. Before a vote could be taken the Cabinet quit and one of its representatives announced that five of the members who are also Senators, would immediately resume their seats in the Senate, thus giving Penaranda a safe majority in that Chamber in case the expected vote of confidence comes up.

News came last night that the entire Chilean Cabinet had also resigned to permit President Juan Antonio Rios to reorganize things. Rios has already called a group of national leaders to serve as replacements, including a number who are active in opposition political parties. Previously, Rios had kept the *politicos* out, accusing them of lack of discipline and petty politics. It is surprising how little most Argentines here know or care about political movements in near-by countries. Probably they would be more interested if they could get straight factual reporting. So much of what happens, however, is too explosive and too likely to affect relations. As a

result, much of the information is second-hand. Similarly, Argentine news, while watched with great interest in Uruguay, Chile and other Latin-American countries, is probably less effectively covered just over the borders than it is in the States or those Latin Republics farther away. I've read better, more intelligently handled news about Argentina in Mexican papers, than I have in those from Santiago. Here again, it is not that the Santiago writers don't know what is going on, as much as it is that anything the Ramírez Government wouldn't like to appear in Chile, would be officially held back or at least trimmed down, while far away in Mexico the pressure is less and the perspective better.

Some interesting dispatches from Rio in last night's papers: Spanish ships operating in the South Atlantic have, for some time, been carrying contraband for Axis subs and otherwise aiding enemy operations. Brazil intercepted one ship, the *Margarita* and escorted her back to Recife to answer denunciations of Santos customs authorities. The *Margarita* and two other Spanish boats, the *Caribe* and the *Cabo Figueras*, have also been detained and their entire cargoes seized. I understand that hundreds of tins, labeled fat, were nabbed and, on being opened, were found to contain Diesel oil and foods intended for Nazi submarine crews.

SEPTEMBER 2nd

The Government is out to encourage manufacturing and local industries, especially "those tending to raise the standard of living." A special industrial credit fund, built up mainly from profits made on the issue of subsidiary monies is to be used to discount loans made by private banks. Minister of Finance Santamarina, announcing the measure, said the need for encouraging the development of local industries, especially those made necessary because of war conditions, had been recognized. Since risks in making loans for this purpose were greater than in an ordinary commercial operation, private banks consequently had avoided much activity, therefore the Industrial Credit Bank.

Argentine home industry has its supporters and detractors. Many

insist that, as a primarily agricultural country, Argentina will always do better to produce her meat and wheat and import manufactured goods. Others assert local manufacture is necessary, even though it may raise prices. The danger in Government-aided industrial development like this is that it is often artificial and buying *Industria Argentina* instead of United States or other goods becomes a patriotic question. This tends to shove prices way up above what their real level should be.

SEPTEMBER 4th

The broad outlines of a sweeping program calculated to change Argentine national life generally and alter the structure of almost all Federal institutions was announced today. The Military is certainly out to make things over. A total of fifty-one important measures were hashed over at today's lengthy Cabinet session, most significant being a series of new statutes governing the organization of political parties. Details aren't revealed, but there's considerable speculation in view of the fact that political activities have already been forbidden in the Provinces of Entre Rios and Mendoza.

There are to be modifications in the income-tax regulations, an excess profits tax, and a re-organization of taxes in general. All the Ministries are full of steam and just aching to reform the people. Justice and Education want to modify the penal code, especially with reference to the suppression of usury, the exploiting of games of chance and "graft among public officials." There is also a vast plan of educational reform. Curricula, timetables, methods and systems in every school from the primaries up to the universities are to be revised, and there is also to be a national physical-fitness program. Interior is going to reorganize political parties, create a public health board, reorganize the Federal police and establish civil-service work conditions. Municipal procedure throughout the country is to be standardized along what is described as the United States system. Vast plans for public works (which the Government only a little while ago said would be curtailed because they were costing too much money) are to be put into effect—but this time

handled "with the utmost economy and dispatch," and no dirty business. How the colonels have time to scheme up all these elaborate new plans, let alone put them into execution, has Argentina guessing. One of my newspaper friends covered a tablecloth at lunch today proving that, according to Press Office figures, Ramírez has been signing an average of eighty-five decrees daily, including Sundays and *fiestas*. By way of comparison, Vargas authorized an average of sixty-five daily during '42. They're telling this story: Seems a gent was sitting in his bathroom, high up in the City Hotel idly tearing off yards of toilet paper which he unwittingly let fly out the window and over nearby *Plaza Mayo*. An hour or so later a detachment of soldiers knocked violently at his door. Admitted, they demanded to know if he had been responsible for the paper barrage. Meekly he confessed, apologizing: "Sorry. I was careless." But the colonel in charge was adamant. "It is the concentration camp for you." "And why?" asked the amazed paper tosser. "*Caramba, hombre*, all that paper has floated in the window of the *Casa Rosada* and Ramírez has been signing it."

SEPTEMBER 4th

Ever since a day or two after the June 4th coup, stories about the GOU, the all-powerful colonel's clique which really runs Argentina, have been going around. Some have been noted here, but most of them I have saved in a special dossier until enough information could be checked and cross-checked to make a really comprehensive and logical story. The more you dig into it, the more fantastic, unbelievable and dangerous it becomes. Argentina's new dictatorship is not a political party. It is a cult, almost like those of the Middle Ages. In some ways it is like the Japanese military Bushido, which, ridding itself of those Army and Navy chiefs who favored moderation, strong-armed their island country down the road to an absolute authoritarian regime on the basis of restoration of national honor, patriotism, anti-foreignism, eventually to try its hand at licking the world. The GOU has the same patriotic, nationalistic, anti-foreign fetishes. It is still too young to judge all its directions, yet for our

hemisphere it represents a danger comparable in many ways to that of Japan's militarists and to the Prussian heel clickers who helped guide the Nazi plans.

The group that is today the GOU is in reality an after-growth of the 1930 Argentine military revolution. Back in '30, General José Felix Uriburu organized a quick but effective coup, which put the military in command. Uriburu held to the principle that the Army "had the right and duty to intervene when civil government failed." But many an Army officer felt that Uriburu's movement, the first such upheaval since 1890, did not have the lasting effect it deserved because it wasn't well enough prepared, only covered half the possibilities, and needed stronger leadership.

Some kind of talk of the need for further Army intervention had been going on ever since 1930, despite the fact that in that interval General Agustin P. Justo—in his heyday a powerful Army figure—held the Presidency for six years. The crystallization of the GOU idea, according to all evidence, started only three years ago up in the Mendoza garrison, in the rich, grape-growing region at the foot of the Andes. Mendoza, since 1930, had been a kind of cradle of Argentine fascism, in some ways similar to the Louisiana which bred Huey Long. Mendoza had a strong Italian population dominated by the rich *bodegueros*—men who had made their fortunes and who feared new liberal ideas which they felt might take away what was theirs. Nazi influence in the Mendoza area was also strong and so were the fascist-style *sindicatos*. Mendoza was also the region where Government had the strongest control over the daily activities of the average man.

The GOU's founders are not all known, but it is definite that *Coronel* Juan M. Perón, now emerging as the leading figure, was stationed at the garrison at that time. Nineteen forty-one was the year of German victory, of the Nazi blitz through France and the Low Countries, and the pro-nationalist Argentine Army admirers of the successful swastika military machine became more and more convinced that maybe Argentina needed something like this strong hand to find its place in the sun. Ailing Dr. Roberto M. Ortiz was then President. Sick, unable to control the *políticos* under him, he retained the title but lost the power. The resulting condition was one

of unrest and disquiet, a perfect set-up for the kind of plans and schemes which the Nazis sought to develop here.

After duty, in the *Cantina de Oficiales*, the *coroneles*, young, ambitious, on edge, talked of the need of doing something. From Mendoza emerged the rough outlines of a group that christened itself with the grandiose title of *Cruzada de Renovación Espiritual* (Crusade of Spiritual Renovation). The same sort of thing, with variations, was being talked about in other garrisons. As the *oficiales* from Mendoza moved to other posts and new officers were transferred to Mendoza, ideas were exchanged, new blood injected, formative schemes hatched. Primarily the program of the young colonels was based on a desire to advance themselves. They felt that many of the older generals were primarily interested in the easy social life, in their pensions and their prerogatives. In civil life they felt Castillo and the *políticos* and political parties were corrupt and self-seeking. They felt the only solution was the Army; thus, with the true Latin flare, they pledged themselves on their sacred honor to the idea of a *grupo de oficiales unidos* (Group of United Officers); and the initials were also made to stand for the slogan: *Gobierno, Orden, Unión*. (Government, Order, Union.) Originally, practically all were colonels. Some have since moved up to higher ranks and others, who in 1941 were majors, captains and lieutenants, have now advanced to colonelcy. Many had gone through the Uriburu movement, so they determined to make their plan well and await the propitious moment. The Argentine officers who had worked in Germany and Italy took the lead. The Nazi system of State superiority, it seemed to them, was what Argentina needed. They didn't think of bringing Hitlerism here in the sense that we may think of it; rather they were convinced that Argentina needed a strong, Army-controlled way of life, lest communism spread, and liberal, democratic practices destroy *La Patria*.

Almost from the start they had inspiration from a few highly placed but very influential churchmen, also scared by the Red bogey. One group within the GOU is now impatient of the Church, but in the formative days the strict code of settling differences among themselves was always followed. While some few outsiders had something of an idea such a group might be in existence, the secret was extremely well kept.

Their motives are many, but principally they are:

- 1) Belief in an authoritarian system of Government with strict control. The zeal for holding liberals—generally identical with communists—in check, is based partly on the military mentality which distrusts all it doesn't understand and finds in the rigidity and regimentation of the fascist approach, a solution for all ills.
- 2) Disgust at corruption and political parties of previous Governments. In this many Argentines share; the pro-democratic ones felt improvements could only be achieved by education and development of a widespread sense of citizenship and social consciousness; the Army felt certain that corruption could be decreed out of existence.
- 3) The desire to improve the standard and lot of the military. Under the indifferent generals, the *coroneles* felt the Army had not only failed to get the needed arms and munitions but had lost prestige, standing, face. The German influence on the young officials was partly that of the Nazis, partly that of the old Prussians, who held the armed forces to be the decisive factor in any State. The Nazis inspired and encouraged, propagandized and persuaded, always working on the key men whom they could woo and win, rather than the people on whom the democracies concentrated.
- 4) The formation of a South American *bloc*, free from Yankee influence, a *bloc* based on the belief that deep down most Latin Americans instinctively continue to fear what the Nazis consistently describe as "the Colossus of the North." With this was linked the self-assertive, "Master Latin Race" theory that Argentina is the "true leader of Latin America," a leadership which some of them admit muscle-flexing Brazil seems to have usurped. This, the military insists, is chiefly because of United States help, forgetting the part Brazil is playing in helping win the war and the fact that the very same help was available to her.
- 5) The "Argentina-for-the-Argentines" motivation applies to a resentment of all foreign influence, all foreign investment, an obsession that Argentina could do it better.

There is also a strong Spanish Falangist influence, a carefully cultivated belief in a strong single-party State, supported by the clergy, to make Argentina a firm Christian nation.

The GOU had the spiritual and moral help and advice of many a retired pro-nationalist Army man. One such was General Basilio Pertiné, director of many a blacklisted Nazi firm and since the coup appointed to the strategic Mayoralty of Buenos Aires.

Who are the leading figures in the GOU? What sort of men are they? Where are they going? What do they want to make of Argentina?

Before the GOU decided to take the plunge it had enlisted or had under its control some 60 percent of the 3,600 active officers on the Army list. The lowest-ranking insiders were sub-lieutenants, the power was vested in the colonels, but some generals were included among the number. They were organized in the same way as the Nazis and communists were organized in their early days—in classic cells. The organizational job was well handled. Meetings were regular, exchange of information carefully co-ordinated. The GOU had its own political committee, its own civil and military espionage and educational methods. In many ways it carbon-copied the Nazi *Mein Kampf* with its own Gestapo, its blindness to the cause and the aid and support it had from the Nazi-subsidized nationalist organizations.

The men most responsible for its organization and implementation were these:

Colonel Juan Perón: From the beginning this forty-five-year-old widower, strong-willed, aggressive, subtle, was one of the most dynamic of the young GOU men. A personality-boy with a ready smile, a quick wit and a belief in himself. He is *netamente Argentino*, the result of Argentina's own kind of racial mixture, a product of the Argentine soil. For several years he trained the conscripts who make up Argentina's Army; won fame as an Army ski instructor. Between the end of 1939 and the start of 1940 he went to Acosta in Italy to study the organization and instruction of Alpine troops. He felt at home there, partly because of his ancestry, partly because in those days the fascist Army—untried by real war—was still in its glory. The young colonel traveled over Europe, studied French, Italian and German and then returned and went to Mendoza, the canal-marked, tree-lined, wine-making town where the important Andean garrison is located. He had the time of his life training ski troops and

he's still as proud of his ability to manipulate on the barrel-staves, as of his home-carpentering and finesse in turning out steaming platefuls of toothsome *ravioles*. At Mendoza he had plenty of time to follow his long-time hobby, studying political and social sciences, and it was here, discussing his spiritual renovation ideas with other young officers, that the clique which was to become the GOU got its real push. Long interested in mass psychology and in military strategy (he has written five books on the subject, some of them used as Army texts) Perón thinks Army techniques can be applied to the organization of the masses and that strategy is good preparation for Government administration. He has made it work so far, especially on his inner-circle opponents. Although a to-the-end nationalist, he is more elastic, more alert and more cunning than most of the others, yet as ruthless and as determined as any.

Coronel Emilio Gonzalez: One of the "Big Four," is Perón's chief rival for the leadership. Trim, medium-sized, he is intelligent, somewhat more reserved than Perón but with a pleasant, disarming smile, an outwardly cordial and diffident manner. Apple-cheeked, with a broad forehead, he likes to dress smartly, insists upon strict brass-button discipline. Born in Entre Ríos, Ramírez' native state, he was close to Ramírez long before the coup, knows how to handle him better than any of the others. He had a good record at the Military College, wound up as an infantry officer, and married into a military family. A hard worker, his ideas on how Argentina should be run are as emphatic as any in the GOU. With a reputation for being rather Machiavellian, he is the sort of *hombre* it is hard to keep a finger on. It was he who organized the political espionage in the formative days of the GOU and he who helped get the goods on the *políticos*, or at least got enough on them to let the colonels toss two Castillo Cabinet Ministers into the jug and make a number of others think about buying boat tickets to Montevideo.

Gonzalez refused the job of Under-Secretary to the War Ministry, from which Perón is now running the Army, preferring the Presidential Secretariat, which carries the rank of Minister. In this hub-spot he keeps a close eye on Ramírez and watches his comings and goings. But fully as important, he has built up his own office as the center through which all Cabinet decisions must pass and through which the press and radio are controlled.

Gonzalez was always close to the nationalist youth organizations, absorbed their philosophy and beliefs and has, since coming into power, helped dissolve all their pro-democratic opponent organizations while giving them all kinds of liberties.

General Alberto Gilbert: A long-time admirer of German-Japanese warfare tactics, Gilbert's chief revolutionary ideology developed during his term as Military Attaché in Madrid. Now fifty-six, he didn't participate actively in the Uriburu revolution because he was in Chile at the time, but in Madrid he saw the civil war from Franco's side, studied Falangist methods and operations; developed a bitter hatred against the Spanish Republicans. When he came back to Argentina he brought with him not only Falangist ideas but a veritable library of Falangist literature, dossiers on its methods and a conviction that the *Partido Unico*, one-party system, might eventually be necessary for Argentina. A fierce-mustached cavalryman, an expert shot and handy with the blades, he developed a following within the Army. Although older than some of the other *coroneles*, he was particularly bitter at his own lack of advancement, for in thirteen years he only moved up from a lieutenant colonelcy to colonel's stripes. Married and with two children, he had some private fortune which gave him entry into a social strata somewhat above officers of similar rank and he felt he deserved a generalship, at the least. He was among the first of the *coroneles* to get himself a higher rank. (Many have been content to retain their old designation, feeling that it "proves" their lack of personal ambition.) In the Army, Gilbert has long been known as the police type. After the Uriburu coup gained power, he was named head of the Section of Information, assembling files and records on people he considered dangerous. The German system was a natural inspiration. In his present post as Interior Minister, he controls important police departments throughout the country. He has been the chief opponent of a break with the Axis; aspires to the Presidency himself.

Coronel Emilio Ramírez: No relation to the President, he holds the vital job of Chief of Police of the Federal Capital of Buenos Aires; wants to create and head a national police force. To the Army he is an officer *sin cultura*, without culture. The highest appointment he had until the coup was as director of the school of sub-officials, not a particularly distinguished post. He is cold, severe, hard, im-

movable; a pro-Nazi not because he likes Germans but more because of his own temperament. Most rigid of all the GOU men, he believes especially in a strict control of the public's moral and mental liberties; now runs the official Gestapo. Colonel Ramírez is especially bitter against communists or anyone he suspects of Marxist tendencies and has been as responsible as anyone for the wholesale arrests and internments of suspects.

Coronel Elbio Anaya: Probably one of the most intelligent of the *coroneles*, he has also made himself a general since the revolution. His interest in the GOU stemmed from his ardent nationalism. No respecter of persons and somewhat uncouth in manner, he has a special objection to the ladies; treats them in a blustering, cavalry-school manner reminiscent of the days of *Life with Father*. But underneath, he is more widely read, more amenable and more subject to a reasonable argument and approach than the others. Since entering the Cabinet, he is said to have become more and more convinced that a break with the Axis is necessary, not alone on ideological grounds (which he tells friends he thinks are secondary) but because he feels that it is a smart idea for Argentina to get along with the obvious winner. He is more with the moderate group within the inner circle. His brother, *Coronel* Laureano Anaya, is President of the powerful Officers' Club, the *Circulo Militar*. Anaya was in command of the First Cavalry Division and Commander of Campo de Mayo barracks at the time of the coup; headed the General Staff of the revolutionary troops, organizing the take-over. Able, quick to grasp facts, he is what might be called the twenty-four-hour-a-day worker, sits at his desk twelve or fifteen hours a day and takes big bundles of documents home. But he distrusts civilians and in a sense is the prototype of the Army man who made the revolt because they were sure no layman could run *La Patria*.

Coronel Hector Ladvocat: Has picked himself for the role of Goebels. A tough guy, he sets little store by learning. To him, journalists with no talent for writing are worth as much as journalists of sound literary repute, all that matters is that they write favorably, even to exaggeration, of the Government and all its works. He hopes to set up a central propaganda bureau to control the press, radio, films and theatre.

Where does Ramírez figure in all this?

And what about Rawson who marched at the head of the revolutionary troops, served as President for a day and then became such a headache to the colonels?

Ramírez apparently wasn't tipped off to the coup plans and the GOU until just a few months before Castillo was overthrown. He had been picked by Castillo to replace General Juan M. Tonazzi, whose pro-democratic sentiments were getting a little too uncomfortable for the neutrality policy and was therefore considered thoroughly unsafe. Castillo, however, gathered that something was afoot in the Army, for in the months immediately preceding June 4th he tossed the whole book of Dale Carnegie at the officers in an effort to woo them by fancy dinners, promises of promotion. The GOU, which was doing its own planning during all this time, drank Castillo's wines, downed his food, laughed weakly at his feeble jokes and kept up their plotting.

From the beginning the idea was to have Ramírez front as President because as Minister of War he was the ranking Army chief. The *coroneles* figured that an older, better-known figure would make a good impression and still not keep them from doing anything they wanted to do. Besides, the Radical Party leaders were huddling with Ramírez over the idea of making him their candidate for the Presidency, against Castillo's hand-picked choice, Robustiano Patron Costas, and this indicated that he might have popular support.

Rawson, who happened to be the senior officer at the big Campo de Mayo cantonments which form the biggest garrison controlling Buenos Aires, was only let in on the scheme just before the troops were to march. Apparently he became so dizzy from the loud cheers of the crowd as he paraded down the Avenida de Mayo, that he later strode out on the balcony, Ramírez and the *coroneles* by his side, and proclaimed himself President. The GOU might have been willing to let him remain, but for the immediate wave of disapproval which followed the announcement of his Cabinet and its two outrightly pro-fascist civilians. Although there has been squabbling behind the scenes and many a Presidential ambition blossoming under the hot sun of public glory, Ramírez still makes an effective capstan and front man, who, if displaced, might set the inner council to open scrapping. And thus he remains—at least for the present.

SEPTEMBER 5th

Dave Matson and Bill Reece were picked up by the police last night in the stiffest action yet taken by the regime against an American enterprise. They're still in jail as I write this, but the wires between here and Washington are burning and hell is sure to be raised. Dave is chief engineer and Bill is chairman of the local subsidiaries of the Electric Bond and Share; they head a whole group of United States and British-owned electrical companies which operate in provincial territories. The police raided their offices and grabbed all the books and quite a number of other officials. They did this without knowing very much why they were doing it, except that the Interventor up in Tucumán telegraphed after deciding to reopen a probe into how the company's Northern branch renewed its concession. Dave's wife, I understand, phoned Ambassador Armour, who is now in the States, and Ed Reed, our Chargé d'Affaires called on the Foreign Office to inquire. The British are also interested since Reece, a New Zealander, is a British subject.

Both Matson and Reece had been at their offices at the time of the raid, offered every co-operation, but apparently weren't wanted. They went home and Reece, who is not well, climbed into bed. About midnight the cops came round again, ordered him up, and began a search of his apartment, on the prowl for documents. They rifled through Dora Reece's lingerie, to her justified indignation.

SEPTEMBER 6th

Charlie Batchelder, head of the local subsidiary of General Electric, and a member of the board of the United States electrical companies escaped being arrested with Dave Matson and Bill Reece yesterday by a fluke of luck. He was out at Tortugas Country Club with Lansing Wilcox, President of the First National of Boston, biggest American bank here, and was tipped off by somebody that it might be healthier for him to breathe the country air until the excitement died down. He did, and came in this morning, reported to the police and was released a little while later. Local indignation among Argentine

business men who know the situation is strong, especially since it now becomes known that Dr. Juan Linares and Senor Jorge Moreno, Argentine directors of the Cia. Norte Argentina, were also arrested and cross-examined in connection with the Tucumán concession. They are under arrest in their own homes. Some of the provincial authorities have come down from Tucumán and are talking about taking the arrested North Americans up there. Apparently they want to find somebody to blame, and if Matson, Reece and Batchelder are hauled up to the comparative wilds, they might get the same kind of time as lynching suspects in our own South. I spoke to Matson today at his apartment. Like many other people here, he wasn't willing to talk over the phone. He said that his company's concessions in Tucumán were strictly on the up and up, and that no proof of improper operations could be produced because there hadn't been any illegalities. The way in which the Government presses this case will be a good indication of its attitude toward the States.

SEPTEMBER 7th

Increasingly severe measures are being taken to control both the local press and the stories being sent out to the States and to other Latin-American countries. This indicates as much as anything growing official nervousness. Actually there isn't supposed to be any censorship, but what exists is subtle and strong. Anything considered critical of the Army is automatically blue-penciled from correspondents' outgoing cables. Some of us, of course, are finding ways and means of getting out the truth as we see it, through Montevideo. But the big press associations, whose primary interest is selling news to Argentina and not covering the Argentine for the rest of the world, are filing only straight announcements, echoing the official Press Bureau declarations and letting it go at that. I've shop-talked this thing with some of them any number of times. Their public explanation is that impartiality makes commenting on the news impossible. Privately, they have other reasons. One is that their investment in Argentina is too great to take any chances, especially since the military is already worked up over some of the hot stories appearing

in the United States and foreign press. The other is that they feel it more important to get United States news about the world at large into the Argentine press than to worry overmuch about telling readers in the States everything that goes on here. For if they were chased out of Argentina or closed down for an indefinite time people here would have to rely on German news. Thus they feel that even though they're limited in what they send out, the American public is getting a pretty good idea of what goes on in this more and more isolated land.

SEPTEMBER 8th

Yesterday afternoon Ed Reed, our Chargé d'Affaires walked around to the Foreign Office with a bombshell in his brief case. It was an answer by Secretary of State Hull to a letter written by Argentine Foreign Minister Storni on August 30th. Storni took one look—Ed gave him a copy of the letter in Spanish as well as the original in English—and apparently called Ramírez on the phone right away. A hasty Cabinet meeting was called and after two hours the Cabinet and the colonels' kitchen cabinet finally decided to allow the text of the note to be printed by the papers. The short-wave radio and the telegraph services were already carrying the text from Washington. I want to get this point down before it gets confused: When Storni wrote his letter which was carried to the States by Ambassador Armour, he planned to hand it out to all the papers right away. It was suggested he wait until the answer had been received—a usual courtesy—and then both letters would be issued simultaneously.

Storni's note explained right in the first paragraph that it was written with the full approval of Ramírez "in the hope that by this means his views may also be made known to President Roosevelt." The note was a formal, detailed repetition of the official Argentine contention that its foreign policy of "prudent neutrality" actually represents an invaluable contribution to hemisphere solidarity and co-operative continental defense. Storni for example, suggested that President Roosevelt "make a gesture of genuine friendship towards our people," adding that such a gesture might be the urgent provi-

sion of airplanes, spare parts, armaments, and machinery to restore Argentina to the position of equilibrium to which she is entitled with respect to other South American countries." Storni also admitted that "while the people were for the Allies" the Army seemingly was not and that deliveries of armaments were necessary to win it to anti-Axis policy. He complained Argentina's neutrality had been "misunderstood" and that to fulfill its obligation it needed a cause to justify that action, so that it would not appear to be taken "under pressure or threat of foreign agents."

Hull's twenty-four-hundred-word answer was a masterpiece of deflating which just about takes the pants off Storni, Ramírez and Co. After listing the commitments made by the Argentine Government at the Rio Conference, he proceeded to show how these commitments had been flouted, and to express his "astonishment at your statement that, for the Argentine Government to fulfill these obligations would afford grounds to believe that such action was taken under the pressure or threat of foreign agents [since] the obligations in question were freely entered into by all the American Republics and have been carried out by all except Argentina." And every other point that Storni raised was knocked over with equal firmness and with unanswerable logic. The public's reaction and the colonels' comeback are going to be worth studying. The papers this morning carried the full texts, and they've been told they may comment freely. Apparently the Government expects reaction will be all its way. My guess: They're going to be unpleasantly surprised.

(Later)

The collapse of Italy practically knocked the whole Hull-Storni correspondence off the front pages of the papers this afternoon. It is a tough break, not only for us correspondents who live for moments like this, but for the whole question of Argentine-United States relations. As a result of the bigger news, the cold analysis of Argentina's foreign policy and the detailed United States rebuff attracted virtually no editorial attention. I don't think opinion has yet crystallized. *Noticias Graficas* has an editorial that sounds like José Agusti.

They "welcome the opportunity to comment," but admits it feels strange—"like a miner emerging from a pit." Then *Noticias* says: "The military hasn't satisfied the hopes or sentiments of the country in international affairs. Certain men have tried to give a totalitarian character to the June 4th revolution, and Axis sympathizers, disguised as Catholics, preach neutrality, but they're the same kind who delivered Spain to Nazi barbarism."

SEPTEMBER 9th

I've been out gathering reaction and comment on the whole Storni note exchange. It is certainly terrific. *Noticias Graficas* was indefinitely suspended late last night and the final edition seized because of its articles on the correspondence. *La Union* of Tucumán, an important provincial paper, was similarly padlocked. Both foolishly took the Government's green light to comment at its face value without realizing it meant that they could comment against Hull, but nothing else. From Argentines you get irritation, pleasure, astonishment, all depending on the point of view. The surrender news from Rome, which broke just as *porteños* were getting over their amazement at what the diplomatic postman brought, should, people feel, make Argentine severance of Axis ties easier. One of the can't-do-it-explanations most frequently allowed to leak out has been the "unchivalry" of striking a nation, especially one so close to Argentina as Italy, when it's down.

Aside from the people, publication of the notes has caused a crisis within the GOU itself. Even the question of issuing the texts publicly brought on a fierce battle among the Cabinet and colonels. Storni, I understand, favored publication, arguing people would soon learn the details anyway. Gilbert thundered no and, in fact, had the censors in the Communications Department hold up the release even after short-wave listeners were getting it from the States and London. His chief opponent at the lengthy Cabinet session, I am told, was Colonel Anaya, and the tussle between the two certainly indicates the increasing inner GOU conflict. Naturally, there has been no official reaction. Yet from what I can gather, the Administration feels its face has been slapped. Pro-democratic Argentines, long

critical and irritated by their country's lone wolfing, are saying Hull spoke for the whole hemisphere. Hull they add, has supplied the kind of answers that can't be argued away. There is plenty of talk that in the face of Washington's strong tone there is nothing else to do but break with the Axis or make renewed demands, be refused, and break with the United States, which would produce a popular uprising. There is also a general feeling that the Government will have to reorganize or re-arrange its foreign policy, and that if it doesn't, Rawson is still around. He has been calling on Ramírez and the colonels. Many who have been fearful of criticizing the Government have let themselves go. Some are theorizing that the papers were told they could make an outcry so that the military, pretending to hear the voice of the people for the first time, might have an excuse for breaking with the Axis. The quick way in which *Noticias* was squelched makes me doubt that theory. Storni's explanation that Ramírez read and approved the letter first is going to make it hard for the military to say its Foreign Minister was just a talkative gent jawing out of turn. And Storni's own admission that the Axis was losing the war and that the people supported the United Nations isn't going to be easy to explain to Berlin. "How could they be so naive?" is a question you hear repeatedly. This morning's papers—scared by *Noticias'* closing—cautiously and circumspectly suggest steps should be taken as soon as possible to shelve the present foreign policy, but there is no thunder. Real tip-off is in *Cabildo*, which turns a violent attack on Storni: "Like all diplomatic corps, ours had good and bad leaders, good and bad moments. This is the unhappiest moment of all." Then, examining Storni's letter point by point, *Cabildo* charges him with a list of crimes tantamount to betrayal of the nation.

SEPTEMBER 10th

Storni has been thrown to the wolves. People expected it—but not so soon. He resigned last night, after a brief conference with Gilbert, climaxing a day of furious Casa Rosada activity. Storni's note of resignation said he had "tried to collaborate as far as possible," but that he was stepping aside because of his patriotic interest in re-

moving "an obstacle which my presence might signify for the success of the Government." From the way *Cabildo* and *Pampero* hauled him over the coals yesterday, it was clear the pro-Axis crowd felt his removal would solve everything. Hull's note, the Nazis screamed, is "intolerable and unacceptable." And Storni's letter "contains concepts which an immense majority of the nation rejects." Storni's resignation was immediately followed by that of the Under-Secretary of State, Dr. Roberto Gache, a long-time career man, and Dr. Ricardo F. Bunge, who has been acting as Director of the American Section of the Division of Political Affairs in the Foreign Office. Even take-it-easy Argentines are beginning to wonder. Storni's letter is the first opportunity many of them have had to hear what kind of argument the Casa Rosada advances for preserving neutrality. Taken alone, the Argentine plea would probably have sounded all right. But coupled with the stinging of the old Tennessee Judge, the arguments fell flat. I've heard as many what's-next rumors as there are café table conversations. Again plenty of counter-revolution whispers. Troops have all been ordered to be on the alert. The easy way Storni walked out and, at the same time, pledged his support, makes me think that there isn't much chance he or his followers can organize a counter-move. But will the Navy take the plank-walking of its one representative in the Cabinet without a bo'sun's toot?

Ironic note: Special police guards have been posted around the United States Embassy offices in the Boston Bank building and around the Embassy residence. Apparently the Government wants to show it is prepared "to protect the Yankees," if public resentment against the United States gets so strong as to lead to attacks. Only ones who might do any demonstrating are the officially inspired nationalists. They won't miss this chance of trying to make Hull out as "insulting" Argentina.

(Later)

What is going on within the walls of the Casa Rosada can only be surmised, but it must be a slam-bang showdown. Storni, I now learn, favored severance of Argentina's ties with the Axis from the beginning, and gave such assurances to our Ambassador Armour. His pledge, which our Government naturally took as being a promise

supported by all the *militares*, was the basis on which we granted recognition. Afterward, when the colonels decided to stay friends with everybody, he somehow rationalized his position and continued to hold on to his swivel chair and fancy office, instead of resigning at once as his friends urged. The story is being told that Storni wrote Hull, knowing that when his letter was published, reaction would be such as to force Argentina to break. This seems to me to be too round-about a bit of Argentine intrigue to be true. From the way the Nazi-fascist press has been hitting at Storni, even now that he's out, they want to make him the *chivo* (goat) and take all the blame. They insist his resignation "cancels out his unhappy document and disposes of the condition of a simple confidential letter."

Most newspapermen here know the true story. Storni drafted a letter in conjunction with Gache, the Under-Secretary, and sent it over to Ramírez. The GOU started editing and inserting what they thought were irresistible and irrefutable arguments. The kind of suggestions they advanced and the fact that they sincerely believed Washington would come through in response to their ideas, shows how out of this world and up in the clouds they are. Besides, their go-ahead to the papers suggesting that they might comment, boomeranged. They failed utterly to realize that other countries fighting a death struggle to wipe out dictatorship couldn't or wouldn't accept such bunk. The document, as finished by the GOU was such an amateurish piece of would-be diplomacy that it has not only made the Government the laughing stock of its own people but lowered Argentine prestige throughout the Americas.

In trying to find somebody to blame, Gilbert called in Gache, asked how he—a long-time career man—could have allowed such a letter to be sent.

"The letter I wrote was entirely different," Gache said. "The Casa Rosada made the changes."

"Ah, si," said Gilbert, "then I should like to examine your draft. Will you please send it over to me?"

"You can have a copy," Gache answered, "but the original with all the changes made by your colonels at the Casa Rosada won't get out of my possession."

It was the only proof he had that he and Storni were not the real fools. As a consequence, his departure from the Foreign Office was

forced and, I believe, hurdles are being put in the way of his pension.

People are shocked at the disloyalty implied in this affair. They feel that Ramírez should have resigned with Storni; that he was far more responsible for the mess. They're saying he is so determined to cling on to the little power his colonels allow him, that he has been willing to sacrifice a friend. Will public sentiment be considered in the appointment of a new Minister? I hope so because that would indicate a real change might still be possible. Most people, though, are afraid the military clique will just ride more and more roughshod, partly because the colonels still hold a powerful control, and partly because the pro-democratic majority, despite its undoubted feelings, lacks leaders, organization and fighting spirit.



SEPTEMBER 11th

Last night, after I'd got my regular cable off, the Presidential Office announced that Gilbert, in addition to holding the portfolio of Minister of the Interior would "provisionally take over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs." Whether or not Gilbert stays, his appointment is certainly a step away from the democracies. Gilbert's Interior Ministry has been chiefly responsible for the drive against any kind of suspected communist or pro-democratic organization. His takeover, in place of the more realistic Storni, makes it pretty definite there will be no heading our way, at least for a while, and indicates his power in the GOU is going up.

There were demonstrations in town last night, the first I've seen here since June 4th. May be a good sign that the people are waking up. The facts about who was street-showing aren't entirely clear, but this is the best so far: One group representing the Movimiento de la Renovacion Nacionalista (Nationalist Renovation Movement) tossed out handbills around town announcing a demonstration in front of the United States Chancellery at 7 P.M. to protest Hull's letter. People suspect the colonels (whose relations with the nationalists seem to be thicker and thicker) promoted, or tried to promote this show. Idea: to prove public sentiment was against Hull. It didn't

work because pro-democratic groups, (communists, of course, according to the official version) started off on an anti-official march. The cops must have figured that if the two tangled the resulting cat-and-dog mix-up would cause a worse impression than allowing the nationalists to go through with their show. So they stopped both. No nationalists were picked up, but the Vigilantes did grab seventeen antis. One group had started to march from Corrientes and Esmeralda, in the heart of the theatre district. As soon as some of the leaders were hustled away, a second bunch began speech-making and cheering for democracy a block away. The riot squads were right there, and it was over in a few minutes. In the publicly announced list of those arrested, some definitely sound foreign. Nobody would be surprised if these were phony, deliberately given out to make it appear "foreigners and communists" are the only anti-official demonstrators.

Appointment of Gilbert as acting Foreign Minister seems to be only a stop-gap. They couldn't get anybody else, that is, no important elder statesmen of impartial stamp. Today's best rumor: Santamarina and other Cabinet Ministers may resign. There is talk Farrell will be kicked up to the Vice-Presidency and that the colonels, in order to divert attention from their internal troubles, may announce elections, a yarn I consider doubtful, in view of further paper closings. I hear there is terrific pressure on Storni to have him square things and issue a statement accepting all the blame for the note to Hull. Both literary and political observers are still trying to dope out who might have written certain paragraphs in the letter which everybody wants to forget, particularly the inept phrasing and the illogical and contradictory argumentation. The nationalists are circulating manifestoes in Army ranks and tossing out leaflets to pile even more blame on Storni. One of these, signed by Alberto Caprile, Jr., Secretary General of the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (National Liberation Alliance) says that the Army, united with the leaders of the revolution "repudiates the terms of this letter and declares it non-existent."

(Later)

Except for the fact that I checked the following with three Casa Rosada correspondents of local papers, I wouldn't believe it. The

Press Office, around two o'clock this afternoon, rushed out a communiqué stating that a delegation of approximately a thousand ranking Army and Navy brass hats came down to the Presidential office around noon and "expressed confidence in Ramírez and absolute loyalty to his Government." So all is supposed to be well. What seems to really have happened is this: Starting early this morning, all officers, from majors up, stationed in barracks around Buenos Aires, were ordered to report to the President's office immediately. They started coming in around eleven o'clock, congregating in the halls and the main reception rooms, exchanging rumors and guesses as to what was going on. Shortly after noon, waiters suddenly appeared with buckets of champagne and trays of little sandwiches; they handed out glasses to everybody and began pouring. The amazed officers started asking, "*Qué pasa?*" ("What goes here?") A little bit later, out popped Ramírez in tow of Gilbert, Perón, Gonzalez, and the other string-pullers. Somebody shoved a glass in his hand; he raised it and then began: "Gentlemen, I thank you for your pledge of loyalty to me and my Government." That was the first most of those present knew they were giving the regime a vote of confidence. All of this smacks of the Hitler technique. The public, tense in expectation for some news from this morning's announced Cabinet session, got the news of the officers' "champagne pledge" late in the afternoon after most people had left the center of town for the weekend holiday. There is still plenty of tension in the air, however, and so many rumors that there is another official statement: "These stories . . . are simply being circulated by those interested in handicapping Argentina's progress."

SEPTEMBER 12th

Strolling along Avenida Alvear this morning for a breath of air and a change of scene this quiet Sunday, you certainly wouldn't get any idea of the electricity in the air. It is late winter, colder than it should be even at home since that Catalan landlord of ours—despite all the warnings issued by the Rent Board—has started cutting down on the B.T.U's per day because of the enforced rent deduction. On the Avenida you couldn't see any sign of excitement in the vast,

shutter-drawn town houses of Argentina's *sociedad*. Of course they've seen Cabinet crises before and watched Presidents come and go. Yet, so long as they're not personally molested, they don't worry overmuch about what happens to the little people. But do they realize that the new-style military dictatorship now closing its grip around Argentina is different, just as Hitler's style (which at first didn't worry wealthy Germans who had seen such things before) didn't impress until it was too late. The Senora and I met Senor B. at the Confiteria Paris where he was buying the Sunday supply of *masitas*. We shared an after-church cocktail, the traditional Sunday-morning habit of *porteños*. Senor B. is my "authoritative source" so far as going-on, both mental and physical, of the "he lee-fe" (*high-life*) are concerned. His family is one of the oldest, richest and most important in Argentina. Unlike many of his class, he was educated in the States and likes Yankees. His business is to help run the vast family *estancias*, but he prefers management from the desk, not the saddle, no small job considering their gross volume per annum, and he loves keeping in touch with what's going on. The Senora guessed he must have once been bitten by a journalistic bug, because he manages to dig up more inside stuff than any Argentine I've ever met and loves nothing better than telling about it. What's more—and this is the thing that makes him a jewel so far as a foreign correspondent is concerned—he doesn't fake. He has an eye for color and detail and 70 percent of his predictions come true. That is a high batting average in anybody's ear-to-the-ground league.

"How," I asked him, "is Argentina's top-drawer set taking this? What do they think about the colonels and especially their current troubles? Is there a chance of a countermove? Who would be willing or able to toss them out?"

He warned me that all the talk we've been hearing for weeks about tapped telephones, café spies and secret arrests were no joke. Still, he said, to the wealthy, influential Argentines the new Government is not something to be taken too seriously. The military, they believe, are upstarts, unknown people who've pushed their way into power and who propose to stay as long as they can. The Jockey Club crowd consider the *militares* stupid, ignorant, incapable of governing. And the socialite wives, who know Paris as they know their own boudoirs, whose breeding is as pure as that of their own Palermo prize-winning

shorthorns, laugh off Senora Ramírez and the new Cabinet crowd as pretentious and provincial. Some leaders of top Argentine families are, however, becoming more and more concerned over the course of events. The ineptness and guilt of a *gaucheria* like the Storni note pains and distresses them, for it makes Argentine look "uncivilized" to the outside world.

They are beginning to get concerned about officialdom's increasing interest and interference in private affairs. Not so much because they have been personally affected, or are worried about workers' rights or arbitrary arrests of alleged communists, or gags on the press, as by the fact that they feel they should be allowed to run the country and their own lives. The dangerous thing for the pro-democratic side is that the Nazis, whose methods are being more and more emulated here, have won the sons of many of these wealthy, influential families to their inspired nationalist organizations. It is the same old story over again, just as it happened in Germany and Italy, of families divided against themselves, of the rich youngsters being convinced that Argentina's destiny lies in their hands and that it is their duty with the Army to "save the country from communists and liberals," prevent any "foreign invasion" and "give Argentina her place in the sun."

All day long the radio has been blaring out periodically with repeated versions of a new Ramírez "All's-well-with-the-Pampa" statement. The proclamation was suddenly released late last night. Why, no one can be sure. Seemingly, the military thought it would quiet things, make the people feel that perhaps Argentina was going the democratic road. You could read that into it, for the statement is another masterpiece of double talk. It says: "Our sister nations may have the absolute certainty that our nation is firmly joined with their destinies and will know how to honor its historic past." That comes at the close, but it opens with: "Argentines, the historic traditions of a Nation, led since the day of its birth as a free people along the road of peace, of work and justice—a trilogy of virtues which have made it worthy of the respect and of the sincere friendship of all the countries of the world—cannot be diminished or pledged by the confidential statements of any official." In other words, Storni's letter, as the Nazi press insists, was merely a confidential note. Yet

now, maybe Argentina will join the rest of the Americans. You pays your money and you takes your choice.

Storni has come through with the personal shouldering of responsibility to take any sting off the puppet front man, Ramírez. He too insists his letter to Hull was "confidential"; he says he was "guided only by patriotism in making the suggestions," and tries to excuse the chief by saying: "In discussing the idea of a letter with the President I was not sufficiently explicit." The chances are that Storni was forced to sign this note with an appeal to his honor.

SEPTEMBER 13th

Seemingly the powers feel they can explain anything away by issuing an appropriate statement. It would be interesting to know the writers' stable doing all this word embroidery for them. In one of the most surprising and puzzling moves in the flip-flopping history of this new regime, Ramírez announced at noon today that his summons for a Cabinet meeting this afternoon, announced on Saturday, was "a mistake." The session had been awaited by all Argentina and the rest of the hemisphere because it was felt that at last some definite steps would be taken to reorganize things and settle the vexing foreign-policy question. The convocation call was dismissed as casually as though somebody had merely dialed the wrong number. Saturday's deliberations, if you take the official version, were all over and therefore there was nothing more to talk about.

Rumors circulating over the weekend seem to have died down. There are still many who think a counter-revolution is imminent or even already in progress. Trying to check these things is almost impossible. There are few signs of military activity, but here are some of the stories I've heard.

Coup leader General Rawson is still around town. Even though he has been officially farewelled to the ears, he is privately talking a great pro-democratic story. The question of who would stay loyal to whom if he started anything, has everybody abuzz.

Some of the *militares* who were called in for Saturday's bubble-water pledge are burned up by the way they were used to make the

people believe Ramírez and the colonels had complete support of the Army. Some of them, I hear, are so miffed that they've been talking of taking things in their own hands.

Ramírez yesterday inaugurated an art show in the picturesque working-class waterfront district of La Boca. Papers last night and this morning are full of stories and pictures about the "wildly enthusiastic crowds" who greeted him. All were ordered published by the Press Office, and "observers" were around at most papers to make sure the editors dragged in all the adjectives. There were pro-democratic demonstrations in the center of town on Saturday night, all quickly broken up by the police. Nothing was allowed to be published about these.

Prensa this morning delivered the sharpest editorial criticism of the Government's policies, both on foreign affairs and press restrictions, I've yet seen. It pointed out something that we've all been explaining in our cables to the States but which doesn't seem to be recognized by the Army: the way in which the fascist press is using the trick of praising the Government, while at the same time attacking the United Nations and the American Republics who co-operate with them. "Obviously," says *Prensa*, "if the Government didn't inspire these attacks, it at least didn't object to them." Grateful for the fact that the press elsewhere in the Americas had distinguished between such rags and the Argentine people, *Prensa* reminded Ramírez, in no uncertain terms, of his promise to "listen to the Argentine people, in whom sovereignty is vested." While the Government will probably not close *Prensa* for this, smaller papers who dare express such ideas in less literary style are being blacked out. Latest to be shut down is *La Capital* of Rosario, leading paper of Argentina's second city.

SEPTEMBER 14th

The British Government, we hear on good authority, has expressed "complete dissatisfaction" with certain dictatorial policies being followed by the regime. The story can't be confirmed, but it isn't too unlikely. The protest is not concerned with matters of broad policy

but deals more with some steps Argentina has been taking against Britons here. A fortnight ago British groups collecting funds for prisoners of war were halted, a woman committee member detained and the books nabbed. Apparently some of the *militares* tried to get officials of the organization to promise half the cash collected would be given to Argentine charities. Before British Ambassador Sir David Victor Kelly had time to protest that high-handed action, a police chief visited a *kermesse* being held near Buenos Aires, asked how much profit was being made and then said he'd take charge of 50 percent of the earnings. The sponsors protested, whereupon the cop retorted he would take the entire proceeds. Kelly, I understand, went direct to Ramírez. While we can't check what he said, the British Embassy admits there has been considerable difficulty, although adding that it has received assurances that there'll be no repetition. The British protest will undoubtedly carry as much, if not more, weight than any of ours, because Buenos Aires knows that when London cracks down it means business. As Argentina's long-time No. 1 customer Britain could probably do even more here.

The crisis within the Government is still hanging fire. Further resignations are expected. At Saturday's meeting Santamarina is supposed to have warned the colonels that the Government would fall unless its course was changed. Serious as the fighting within the Cabinet may be, the military certainly do not want the public in on it. Tonight comes news of another Hitlerite move. José Agusti, editor of *Noticias Graficas*, has been arrested. Official explanation: He "spread alarmist rumors, lacking all foundation in truth, such as reporting a supposed revolution and modifications in the Cabinet." Furthermore, "This measure is necessary in view of his outrageous attitude and his desire to create a spirit of unrest among the people." By way of warning to any other candidates, the papers and the radio were ordered to broadcast this injunction: "It is our firm intention to put an end once and for all to the circulation of these alarmist rumors, all absolutely lacking in veracity and take severe measures against those responsible." How many other newspapermen have been arrested nobody knows.

Joint measures by all the American Republics to make plain to Argentina what continuance of her present policy is likely to mean henceforth and in the post-war period, are being considered in several important Latin-American capitals. Latin-American diplomats to whom I've been talking explain that although Hull's letter precipitated a crisis which is still boiling, it actually went only so far as to point out some of the things Argentina promised and failed to do. The next step, in view of the roundabout method of answering Hull by promising the other Republics that "Argentina would comply with her inter-American promises," would be for the hemisphere nations, acting in unison, to say in effect: "We took a pledge to act together. All of us have kept our word except you, therefore . . ."

Such action would obviate any kind of crack-down by Uncle Sam alone and would be in line with Washington's policy of avoiding anything smacking of the big stick, even at the risk of being termed appeasing. Just what measures could be taken are uncertain. The Rio agreement of January, 1942, unfortunately omitted any mention of what might be done if one of the signatory nations failed to come through, for a few visioned Argentina might go mulish. Diplomatic relations between Argentina and the rest of the hemisphere are getting more and more strained. According to some diplomats to whom I've gone, there is even a possibility the other hemisphere Republics may close their ranks to squeeze out Argentina, which is possibly what Washington would like to see happen. Press and official reaction from other hemisphere capitals that clearly indicates Hull's rejection of Argentine arguments on behalf of the country's position has found virtually unanimous support. It is hard to get even off-the-record quotes from any of the responsible Ambassadors and Ministers, but some of them admit that the possibility of a mass exodus for "consultation" is being considered.

None too pleased by the way in which Storni was tossed out, they've been further discouraged by General Gilbert, who has been receiving diplomatic corps' calls. Some of them think a successor to Storni will not be announced quickly. In any case, whoever is named, will be pointed toward the future course. How far will England go? The military still wet-nurses the idea that last month's meat agree-

ment—despite Anthony Eden's new, flat rebuttal of any such interpretations—means continued British support of her neutrality.

SEPTEMBER 16th

An unexpected two-hour Cabinet meeting this morning, but while backstage consultations continued, the Cabinet itself apparently touched on the burning issue only by indirect implication, if at all. The communiqué simply said that drafting of new legislation which will govern the conduct of political parties has been completed. Regulations will go into force next week. Political groups must reorganize themselves before being allowed to assume a normal role in consulting with the Administration. Some optimists think the regulations may be a step toward calling national elections. Regulations will supposedly throw out all existing party leaders and demand assemblies to select new ones. Status of members will have to be revalidated, but all of this will be under strict supervision. Can it be that the Government is planning a State Party, on the old totalitarian pattern?

SEPTEMBER 17th

It is ten days since the postman hit the jackpot with the Stornihull correspondence. What has actually happened since? Lots of communiqués reporting everything is calm and plenty of trying to carry on as though unworried; official backstage negotiations and consultations to chart future strategy, and rumors growing by leaps and bounds. The divisions within the colonels' GOU will decide the question, but Ramírez himself, I understand, is wearing out. Some say he is virtually a prisoner and, obviously, he hasn't too much voice in deciding what should be done. He is supposed to have ultimatumed that unless some solution is found before the end of the week, he'll personally step down and refuse to continue as a front. Prisoner or not, he sticks to the Presidential mansion on Calle Suipacha, while the colonels battle things out.

That old decree-issuing mood must be back. Part of it seems a smoke-screen to conceal the fact that the Cabinet crisis continues, cloaking a frantic effort to find a solution. Latest decrees announce that official graft is now to be prevented by having all persons named to public office offer a sworn statement of their assets within thirty days of taking over. Any sudden wealth showing up later would be suspect. This decree bears the number 7633, meaning that Ramírez' average is seventy-five daily, including Sundays, since he assumed office after the June 4th coup.

The colonels are pushing Ramírez a little more forward to give the people a show. Next week he will visit the Northwestern city of Tucumán; next month he'll tour the province of Buenos Aires. General Anaya, a member of the original GOU, but recently reported opposing some of his cronies on the question of Axis ties, is also to be pushed out of the way via a trip to attend a hemispheric educational conference in Panama. This, in his capacity as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction. Rawson is still in their hair and has been recalled from Tucumán, where he was to have delivered a dynamite-packed speech today. Advance copies got around. It seems he was out to contend that Argentina should have joined up with the other American Republics.

The decrees that have been pouring out cover everything from regulation of the drug industry to Argentine repatriation of over one hundred million dollars of the investments held in Great Britain. This vast financial transaction, impossible for most countries in these times, is hailed by *Cabildo* as "proof of the value of peace."

A new negotiated peace drive, designed to solidify Franco's position internationally and, in effect, to slow down Latin America's contribution to the war effort, is now under way here with Falangist help. Don José Muñoz Vargas, Count of Bulnes, who arrived yesterday to take up his duties as Franco's new Ambassador to Argentina, is to

head the effort. Franco, according to people who've just come over from Spain on the same boat as the new Ambassador, is more and more playing the middle game between the United Nations and the Axis. He feels his intervention can be used to bring about a war settlement, ensuring his own position. The new Ambassador, with wild huzzahs from all the Falangist rags, has already begun tossing around neutrality drivel. He is pointing out that "Spain's neutrality has permitted her to live in absolute normality." Spain, he claims, is the world's "only hope of co-ordination and peace." The Falangists here are also playing on what they claim to be the essential difference between their concept of statehood and totalitarianism. "We submit the State to the supreme ends of man, while the totalitarians submit man to the State." Nobody tells them, I guess, but that's exactly what the communists insist. Another new angle to woo Latin America is the foundation of the School of Spanish-American Studies in Seville. A residence has been set up to house Latin-American students. They'll be taught the glories of the mother country and the Franco line in general. Don Paco, who, as a business man dealing in oil, has had an opportunity to travel all through Spain, says that Franco's "Superior Council of Scientific Investigation" is using the scholastic cover-up to indoctrinate dictator philosophy into Latin-American students now studying in Spain. The Superior Council is taking over many of the functions of the now generally discredited Consejo de Hispanidad, formerly Franco's chief propaganda agency for this continent. Latin Americans never gave the Consejo much more than an up-sleeve laugh, but Argentine officialdom takes it seriously. A sidelight is the way *yanqui* expressions, long a colorful part of the *Castellano* spoken in these parts, are apparently to be banned henceforth as part of the drive to "raise the cultural level" of radio, films, theatre and press to that of Spain's. Regulations originally drawn up for radio are now being extended to dailies and magazines, stage and pictures. Spanish-Academy-approved words must be used to replace such *norteamericano* expressions as O.K., weekend, football, sporting terms, etc., all of which have been customarily used in their original because of their aptness and the lack of any really effective translation. They've helped make Buenos Aires cosmopolitan, but they are now "impure." Latest to go on the *verboden* list is catch-as-catch-can, the free-for-all wrestling

terrifically popular here and long advertised simply as "catch." The authorities, who want as few Anglo-American expressions as possible, finally doped out a suitable equivalent: *parodias de lucha* (fighting parodies). Considering the wrestling they do, it isn't too bad a translation, at that.

SEPTEMBER 20th

The Nazi take-over of Rome and the present delicate situation of the Pope is arousing hopes that perhaps now Argentina might break with Berlin. Yesterday, the Foreign Office issued a vague communiqué saying events in Rome were being watched with the closest interest. Ever since the Hull-Storni note exchange it has been generally admitted that the Government felt it needed "a cause to justify a break." This would be one face-saving device. More and more candid Argentines have told me that sinking of one of their State merchant vessels would even be welcome as a provocation. They think that if the Nazis make some untoward move, it will provide the necessary trigger-pull. Catholic-Church influence on the Administration is especially strong. One thing that makes the likelihood of severance of relations seem slim, however, was an editorial in *Pampero* this afternoon. *Pampero* insists the Government's worry is about what it ironically calls the "civilizing bombs" of the Anglo-American air forces: it says Argentines resent the "singularly vicious attack which has caused heavy damages to churches," ignoring the fact that the Nazis first attacked an open city under the guise of "protecting" Rome.

(Later)

S.A., whose company sells more aspirin, hair oil, stomach powders and other panaceas than any other three United States or local concerns in Latin America, told me at lunch today that people in the drug trade see a strong hint of Nazi influence in the latest moves to control radio advertising. The Nazis, once big time-buyers on Latin broadcasting stations, particularly in the aspirin and drug field, have

been severely hit in all Latin-American Republics, although still fairly powerful in Argentina. Even here, however, all but a comparative handful of radio stations have refused to put on Nazi programs for fear of being blacklisted. United States products with the more or less official blessing of Uncle Sam have jumped head first into the market with advertising aimed not only at selling made-in-U.S.A. products, but emphasizing the pro-democratic story. Result has been that throughout Latin America, appeals and propaganda share the microphone with blurbs for such products as Mejoral, (aspirin) and Parker and Ross tummy dynamite. Phillips Milk of Magnesia, Palmolive Soap and other household necessities sell the Four Freedoms and why Hitler must be destroyed. The Nazis, not only for immediate reasons, but looking forward to the post-war market, have long had their propaganda organs screaming against United States publicity on the air and the experts in the trade believe many of the new rules can be traced directly to the German policy of never allowing the competition to get ahead, even though they can't do any direct retaliating at the moment.

SEPTEMBER 21st

Ramírez is to go up to Tucumán tomorrow, supposedly to assist in ceremonies converting the building where Argentina's independence was signed in 1816 into a national monument. Actually the trip is being staged as a popularity-winning journey to give the *provincianos* a chance to cheer. Careful plans have been drawn up. Newspapers have been advised it would be a smart idea to send along top correspondents, and the Army Interventor in Tucumán is getting everything set for the same kind of banner-waving visit Hitler and Mussolini used to make in the pre-war days.

Cabildo came out this morning with a particularly vicious editorial attack on Rawson. His none-too-secret babbling about his opposition to neutrality has the colonels sitting up nights worrying how to best get him off to his post as Ambassador to Brazil. Busy enjoying luncheons, banquets and all kinds of ceremonies, he has stood up after the long, laudatory speeches usual at such gatherings and, in

his colorful, barracks-room voice, tossed bouquets at the democracies by way of emphasizing his differences with those in power. Privately, he has also said that he wished he had declared a rupture of relations right from Campo de Mayo headquarters before the troops moved on June 4th. Actually, Rawson is not especially democratic, but I think that, like the late General Justo, he has decided that the pro-democratic opposition bandwagon suits him better.

The Cabinet crisis is still unsolved, and they seemingly can't get anybody to replace Storni. The *Cabildo* attack will probably provoke Rawson so much that he'll hotfoot down to protest. Whether or not the colonels take any action will show just how well he rates.

The story is all over town that Dr. C., a celebrated surgeon, not only in this country, but in Europe and the United States as well, has been in trouble with the authorities. Seems he mentioned in some public place that he would really like to know who this all-powerful Colonel X was. In spite of his family's well-known interest in politics and the fact that everyone of any standing or interest in the country had filed through their celebrated dining room (lined with row upon row of *criollo* silver dishes, *mate* pots, and other relics of a handicraftsman's past), Dr. C.'s family had never heard of the colonel now issuing orders so grandly. According to the story, as Dr. C. was leaving his office, a plain-clothes man tapped him on the shoulder: "I have orders to take you to the Ministry." Perforce, he had to go. He was kept waiting and waiting and finally ordered in, marched before a desk and, like a recalcitrant schoolboy, handed a dossier.

"You were anxious to know what I've done for my country," barked the colonel. "Here you have my biography. Read it and take good note. There will be a great deal to add to it. And remember also we don't intend to allow busybodies—civilian busybodies—to interfere in the work we have to do." Then, before the doctor could recover, he added a warning: "Had it been anyone else than the famous Dr. C., the treatment meted out would not have been so easy." There are many in jail for saying less.

In the days when Hitler was still trying to keep the outside world from knowing about the thousands being quietly put to death in his secret concentration camps, correspondents in Germany chanced on an unusual method of keeping track of what was going on behind the barbed-wire and machine-gun emplacements. They found that by watching the inconspicuous death notices in the little provincial papers, they could discover strings of small-type "in memoriam" ads which, when added up, provided a definite clue as to what kind of, and how many, people the Gestapo hangmen were currently eliminating. Recently I caught on to the fact that the same practice works in keeping track of the punishment being meted out by the regime to newspapers who dare to criticize officialdom's practices or policies.

Combing through fine-type provincial news sections, I've noticed item after item of brief announcements generally starting: "By Federal Order, the newspaper—has been closed . . ." Added up, these day-by-day paragraphs disclose an amazing fact: The control imposed by the Argentine Government, both of Argentine newspapers themselves and of the news stories sent abroad, has been as severe as any ever seen in this hemisphere. Best estimates I have been able to get put the number of papers closed since June 4th at above 200. Some suspensions have been for indefinite periods, others for a day, two days, a week or more. The insidious and dangerous thing, Argentine newspaper friends tell me, is that this type of suspension saps the will to resistance of many editors. As a result, few newspapers have become willing to print anything about Government policy, except what is contained in the official Press Bureau handouts. For the sake of outside impression, the Administration not long ago issued a long statement to provincial Interventors, explaining there should be no prior censorship and that the press was free to comment constructively. Editors tell me, however, that this has just been a grandstand play—the screws are on as tight as ever. Yet comparatively few pro-Axis, which means pro-neutrality, papers have been closed. *Pampero* and *Cabildo* have had only wrist-slapping suspensions, neither one lasting more than a day. Arrests of newspapermen are also on the increase.

SEPTEMBER 23rd

More rumors that Argentina may sever relations with the Axis—this time within ten days. Hope springs eternal. The dopesters are now saying steps will probably be taken as soon as Ramírez comes back from Tucumán. Even Ramírez has admitted what is obvious to the entire world—that the appointment of a new Foreign Minister will serve to define the policy to be pursued in the future. Pro and anti-neutrality groups are battling it out within the GOU itself, each seeking to nab the vacant Cabinet portfolio. *Cabildo* did get a slap for its attack on Rawson, but it was pretty light—a twenty-four-hour closing. There has been some surprise that Rawson is apparently satisfied with this wrist tap, but the café strategists figure this means a break is likely and that therefore Rawson doesn't care. The only thing this kind of wish-thinking proves is how much the Argentine public lives in hopes.

SEPTEMBER 24th

Cabildo, closed yesterday for attacking Rawson, blossomed out this morning with its first-anniversary number, a congratulatory telegram from Ramírez spread all over the front page. "Our President to Our Paper" was the headline over the "Best wishes and hopes that you, like all the Argentine press, will faithfully interpret the sentiment of our people and contribute to the union of all Argentines." *Cabildo's* "interpretation of Argentine sentiments" includes daily broadsides at the United States, the United Nations and Britain, attacks on democracy and the entire Axis line. Ramírez' telegram, incidentally, was no form message. So far as I can remember, he has not congratulated any other paper here since taking over. His message, in fact, was sent from the Presidential train en route to Tucumán.

As if by deliberate contrast, the strongly pro-democratic, socialist paper, *Vanguardia*, was closed today for editorially hoping that during his trip Ramírez would be able to get first-hand impressions of Argentine sentiments "whether expressed by words or silence."

Up in Tucumán last night Ramírez told his countrymen that "liberty was too precious to lose." The military, he said, proposed to continue along the course followed since June 4th with "unswerving friendship with all other nations but with special emphasis on hemisphere ties." This is the old double talk again—Argentina, the world's best pal.

The decree-issuing mill which does better than Reno on a warm spring afternoon, today ground out No. 9,500. The average is thus eighty-seven daily, including Sundays and *fiestas*. As many problems as a Reno judge, too: ports and shipping, trade treaties within the hemisphere to help build up the Latin bloc, social welfare, including salaries, rents, agriculture and public works are among the latest. Citing some of these, Ramírez said: "Only strong peoples worthy of their own heritage can survive in critical moments. I hope that with the protection of God, and the inspiration of our forebears, we shall continue, encouraged by friendly nations which know how to understand and interpret the generosity and the grandeur of the sentiments which determine Argentina's course." This sounds like a warning to the United States.

The grouzers who have been complaining that British and American policy is not in accord in jointly frowning on Argentina's neutrality policy got a real setback tonight. From London came the announcement that the British Ministry of Food, in full agreement with United States authorities, had reached an agreement with Argentina for the purchase of substantially the entire Argentine exportable surplus of eggs for the season of '43-'44. But with it was a joker. It said, in effect: "We like your eggs, but your foreign policy—phew!" Conclusion of the egg agreement and the recent meat-purchase deal, London declared, should not be taken as having any political significance, adding: "While His Majesty's Government naturally hopes for continuance of the long-established friendship and com-

mercial intercourse between Great Britain and Argentina, they remain disappointed at the determination of successive Argentine Governments to maintain neutrality during the struggle which so potently threatens the principles for which your founders fought. It has, moreover, never been understood in Great Britain why Argentina, alone of the Western Republics, has failed to give effect to the recommendations of the Rio Conference . . . with the result that Axis nationals are still free to conspire on Argentine soil against the interest and security of the United Nations."

The statement also mentioned that the "natural friendly sentiments of the British people toward Argentina are also affected by the treatment which British interests receive"; it added the hope that "British rights and interests would get proper consideration and protection in the future" and concluded: "We trust that in the international sphere the Argentine Government will, at an early date, range herself wholeheartedly on the side of freedom-loving nations."

The local censorship held up the London dispatches for several hours. Apparently approval was finally given because of the realization that the news would get around anyway. While the tone is far milder than Cordell Hull's note, the military is going to have a hard time answering this newest public pillorying.

SEPTEMBER 27th

Any hopes Argentine officialdom may have had that they'd be able to ignore or muddle through the crisis into which they were roller-coastered three weeks ago seem crushed today as a result of the belated, but valuable, British statement. Last Friday Gilbert circularized his colleagues, alleging Argentina's neutrality was supported by Britain, Chile and Brazil. Now Britain is out and Brazil is following. Her Ambassador, José Rodriguez Alvez, left this morning by plane for Rio on a surprise trip "to consult" with his chiefs. Reports going the rounds some ten days ago that many heads of diplomatic missions, especially those in this hemisphere, would pull out unless some Argentine redefinition of foreign policy were forthcoming, are again circulating. The Nazi papers, chief drumbeaters

for the Chilean support idea, of course, ignore the fact that when the Chilean Congress recently voted to rebuild the fire-gutted Argentine Embassy in Santiago there was bitter criticism of Argentine neutrality from all sectors.

It is increasingly obvious that any change will be made only with extreme reluctance. Last week it appeared that the colonels favoring a slightly more democratic tone both internally and externally had won out and that some pro-democratic official would be named to the Foreign Office post. But the nationalists who, while small, are well organized, started demonstrating again. When Ramírez came back from his trip to Tucumán yesterday morning, he was received by a crowd of perhaps 3,000, mostly the just curious. But a hundred members of the Nationalist Liberation Alliance were in front of the crowd, with leaflets, banners, etc., shouting approval of "neutrality and sovereignty." To those who want to see them and nothing else, this is convincing evidence, even though it doesn't fool the world. Nothing, incidentally, could be sent out about the show; the censor killed all stories with even a reference.

SEPTEMBER 28th

Ambassador Armour is to return to Buenos Aires—and with the news from Washington comes another crushing of pro-democratic hopes that F.D.R. would refuse to send him back until Argentina made up its mind. The announcement has been fervently received within Administration ranks. They don't like the United States, but being openly on the outs with Tío Sam is bad business and poor tactics at this time. Washington may make all the denials in the world but people here are certainly going to interpret this as evidence that the United States, while not yessing Argentine policy, is not really concerned.

Just before midnight the Press Office came out with something of an answer to the British Foreign Office communiqué. This masterpiece insisted Argentina had never given any other significance to the recent food deals than the obvious one; that is to say, they were "agreements of purely commercial character and had no bearing on

the international policies which are reserved for the free determination of each country." The statement added that Argentina fully shared the British wish for a continuance of long-established friendship and commercial interchange and "lamented that it is still considered possible that security and interests of the United Nations may be conspired against from our territory. The most careful attention" it was insisted, "had always been given to any claims of enemy activities and all necessary measures had been taken to investigate their veracity and punish any act found susceptible to prejudice Anglo-Argentine relations." Furthermore, it affirmed that "Not one known incident of this nature has occurred lately and if, despite measures taken, such an incident should occur, punishment will be swift and inexorable."

In other words, Argentina insists the Axis is not doing anything here. No explaining why she has not made investigations of her own regarding espionage; activities known everywhere except, apparently, in official circles. Also ignored is the fact that the United States supplied names of several secret Axis agents last November with proofs against all and that Argentina arrested thirty-eight and released thirty-two "for lack of evidence," holding six whose release was made impossible because of the fact that they prematurely confessed. The courts have not yet meted out any punishment to these six, despite the fact that Federal Attorney Gache Peren requested sentencing on August 12th. The new explanation also ignores Axis financial operations and propaganda activities, the Axis papers which receive official aid through a supply of newsprint which they cannot get elsewhere.

SEPTEMBER 29th

Things are getting more and more touchy. Last night a couple of hundred nationalist youths staged demonstrations along the busy shopping street, Calle Florida, only mildly troubled by the police. The tear-gas squad kept them from getting too close to the Boston Bank building, housing the United States Embassy, but otherwise didn't make things too difficult or halt them. They distributed thou-

sands of copies of leaflets insisting that Argentina intended to follow her present foreign policy and not yield to "pressure." A few were finally picked up but, unlike the alleged communist demonstration, the police gave out no names of the nationalists taken in. Chances are all were released.

Apparently at last aware of the dozens of rumors going the rounds, especially the Ramírez-is-a-prisoner story, today comes a complete categorical denial. All rumors are branded the work of "evil-intentioned persons anxious to spread opposition and unjustifiable alarm." There is even a paragraph denying "statements attributed to Ramírez" by persons who recently visited him (meaning Chilean newsmen) saying: "The President has never privately made statements not in accord with his public declarations." After this Ramírez won't dare open his mouth—the colonels even have his line tapped.

SEPTEMBER 30th

Have at last been able to get some uncensored eyewitness reports of the past week's protest strikes. The situation is already extremely serious. Papers are not allowed to mention walkouts. Correspondents and press associations have been warned against filing any dispatches. News has leaked out nevertheless. Leaders of the strike movements have made it plain that their activity to date is "merely a warning" about how they feel. Strikes have been centered in the working-class district of Avellaneda. I estimate 30,000 workers in the meat-packing *frigoríficos* are out. Workers claim another 80,000 construction employees have laid down their tools. The meat-packing demonstrations which have held up the shipment of vitally needed food to United Nations armed forces, originally started as a result of officially ordered dismissal of a veteran union leader of twenty-five years. This was merely the spark to set off further difficulties.

Labor leaders are agitating for a general strike and quite a number of university students have already started walking out in support. The Confederacion General del Trabajo, top labor federation has, under pressure, refused to authorize a general strike. Ramírez is being sent to visit the city of Concordia, 250 miles up

river, to see a stock show, while Colonel Perón tries to use the "cool off" period to settle things.

The renewed postponement of the date of departure of General Rawson and cancelation of the trip of Cabinet strong man Anaya, are also causing plenty of speculation.

The striking workers are not only demanding the return of arrested leaders, but one of their leaflets which I have just seen demands these points:

"Solidarity with the United Nations and peoples; liberation of persons and cessation of persecutions of union workers, students and anti-fascist *políticos*; liberty of press and opinion; Change foreign policy to permit the importation of raw materials and machines needed to permit the functioning of national industry; calling of free elections."

The Mayor of Avellaneda resigned yesterday after an outbreak of violence in which two were killed. Another indication that the internal situation is not under control occurred this morning when ex-Deputy Arturo Poblet Videla committed suicide after firing four shots at the police who attempted to arrest him in his office. He was wanted for questioning in connection with Castillo Cabinet matters. The fact that the story cannot be reported upon at any great length has the café gossipers going full blast.

OCTOBER 2nd

Ramírez is back in town after his up-river trip to Concordia. The behind-scenes battle is still going on, the public is still jittery and on edge and anything can still happen. *Prensa* this morning, welcoming the fact that in Concordia Ramírez toasted "the United American nations forming a firm and solid bloc," added: "The only thing lacking to make that toast true is complete frank incorporation of Argentina. When that step is taken, nobody will be able to say it was taken under foreign pressure because it is the sovereign people of Argentina who wish it." Exactly on the opposite side is *Cabildo*. Admitting this is the most difficult moment in Argentine history since 1816, it says: "Today we are alone again but firm."

Brazilian Ambassador Alves got back in town yesterday from Rio. He wasn't "consulting" but "visiting a sick nephew," although all reports say he spent the entire time with Foreign Minister Aranha. But he did bring back a new excuse for Argentina to break: The Nazi submarine attack on the Brazilian ship *Itapage*. Rio authorities call this "another aggression against the continent," leaving the way open for Argentina to take steps, if she will.

OCTOBER 3rd

The situation within the powerful Catholic Church as a result of the battle for Rome is indicative of the cross-currents that pull and tug at Argentina's direction. Roughly, the clergy is divided into three groups: The Vaticanists, who say the Pope was a prisoner under Mussolini and is now a prisoner under the Germans; the nationalists, who insist the Allies are exaggerating Axis control of Rome, particularly since the Papal Nuncio announced communications are coming in normally; and the liberals, who are not speaking publicly but want to make the Rome question an issue for breaking with the Axis. The colonels, riding close to the Church, watch and wait. Most of the pro-democratic press has been playing up the Rome story but editorial comment is unsensational. Some Catholics feel the unfortunate Papal plight is being used to exploit their religious sentiments for a political manifestation, and the Nazis, never missing a chance, are rubbing this in.

OCTOBER 4th

A delegation from the Confederacion General del Trabajo, Argentina's largest workers' group, has secretly gone over to Montevideo to try to direct from there an appeal for the support of labor unions elsewhere. In a manifesto addressed to the other American Republics, they state the increasingly strong anti-labor measures are not merely fascistic but that the dissolution of Congress, the intervention in all provinces and the suppression of most organizations favoring

the cause of the United Nations, has prevented any expression of popular Argentine opinion.

Among those they say are under secret arrest are José Peter, Secretary of the Workers Union and a member of labor's Central Committee; Emilio Petti, Secretary of the Construction Workers Syndicate; Aurelio Bracco and Segundo Tarditti of the Railway Workers Union; Bruno Antinori, Secretary of the Metal Workers; Julio Liberman, of the Clothing Workers; and Germinal Barbasan of the Textile Workers. Impossible to get any details from official sources, but it is obvious the Government is out to shackle any free labor unions, particularly since it suspects that any move against it might come from these groups. Meanwhile, strikes in the big meat-packing plants of Anglo, Wilson, La Negra and La Blanca continue. The public, of course, gets no news of any of this in its papers or on the radio.

The colonels must have heaved a great sigh of relief this morning—Rawson finally pulled out for Rio to become Ambassador. They didn't take any chance on his coming back. They gave him a special plane whose pilot—they are saying—was told: "If you can drop him on the way somewhere we'll make you a colonel." Rawson kept postponing his exit up to the last moment. Eventually the Casa Rosada, without consulting him, announced he would leave today. This was regarded as a virtual ultimatum to scram or take the consequences. He bowed, but not without telling his pals that he'd be back.

OCTOBER 6th

The atmosphere of tension grows. Today another communiqué censoring the spreading of alarmist rumors and denying everything. "It is also desired to point out that the officious or interested defense of the revolution, and of the military forces which carried it out, is not necessary. Both already have their defense and the prestige of history." In other words, enthusiastic support of some of the fascist drumbeaters is getting a little embarrassing. The radio repeats this endlessly, adding that "Displeased elements are attempting to take advantage of the emotional excitement."

Leopoldo Lugones, Jr., and Martin Aberg Cobo, two of the most pro-fascist nationalists, have just been appointed to the Presidential Secretariat, apparently responsible to Colonel Gonzalez. Lugones is going to be a kind of Argentine Heinrich Himmler and, according to the *periodistas* down at the Casa Rosada, is to establish an Argentine Gestapo. He'll spot those opposed to the regime, have them taken in hand and mete out suitable punishment. His nationalist organization has already provided him with the framework of his own personal spy system, turning in plenty of material to the GOU which they have used to make arrests. Lugones, they say, will have 1,000 picked detectives, will be responsible only to Gonzalez, which won't make the other *coroneles* any too happy.

Son of the famous poet of the same name, young Lugones is supposed to have driven his father to suicide. Lugones, *père*, was, in his early days, a socialist of the extreme type; later he veered to extreme Catholicism and authoritarian ideas, which he transmitted to his son. But Junior went far beyond what his extremist *papa* advocated. During the Uriburu regime he nabbed himself the job of torturing political prisoners and did his job so repulsively that public hatred of the military grew by leaps and bounds. Always a *degenerado* of the worst sort, his reputation is such that his inclusion in officialdom has sent a shudder over the country.

Martin Aberg Cobo, of mixed German and Basque descent, is the scion of one of the country's wealthiest families. Educated by the Jesuits, fanatically bigoted and narrow-minded, he has no real understanding of what the ordinary man in the street feels or desires. He's been one of the chief supporters of Nazi-minded youth organizations since his school days. He is extremely good-looking, with a narrow, hard, fanatic look in his eyes. As Secretary of the Municipality under the Castillo regime he was instrumental in preventing the Argentine people from seeing pictures like *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin's satire on totalitarianism, and innumerable others. A prize package for the new regime.

It is spring time in Argentina, and the Government is giving its diplomatic house a spring-cleaning. But as the mop-up progresses it doesn't seem the kind of house any honest-to-God pro-democrat would feel at home in. In fact, the dust is all being panned into the face of the democracies. First of all, Enrique Ruiz Guiñazú, Castillo's chief exponent of neutrality and *Hispanidad*, has been named Ambassador to Spain, one of Argentina's top diplomatic posts. This is hailed with terrific cheering by *Pampero*, which calls him the "*Canciller de Neutralidad*." He has long had secret ambitions to negotiate a peace between the Allies and the Axis, an ambition that couldn't have been overlooked by the military. An admirer of Franco's *Hispanidad* policy, he is the only holdover from the last Cabinet to bounce up in the new one. Probably even more important, Argentina's popular Ambassador to the United States, Felix Espil, is being called home because they apparently feel he is "too North American" and has reflected the opinion of our State Department, more than the opinion of Buenos Aires.

I hear Storni's ill-fated note was written partly on the strength of Espil's reports and that the Government largely blamed him for the failure of the Argentine Arms Purchasing Mission to the States. Who will replace him? None other than Adrian Cesar Escobar, an opportunistic lawyer and political office holder, of more energy than ability, who, during his term as Ambassador to Madrid, was Franco's favorite diplomat. Escobar's career is as checkered and as varied as his opportunities. During this war he has been known to have operated with the Nazis and fascists, yet back in 1917, he, with six other Deputies, introduced a resolution for breaking with Germany. Known as Argentina's Jim Farley because of the way in which he used his job as Postmaster General to build up his own career, he went to Spain and Franco's glory in 1940; two years later he was shifted to Rio, where he was unnoticed, except when he got a chance to talk. Then he was noted for spouting too much and not very smartly. There is no doubt that when he gets to Washington—considered Argentina's second diplomatic post—he'll talk a great democracy line. Good-looking, handy in the drawing room, and attentive to the ladies, he has made himself popular with many Argentines

by his ward-heeler willingness to help get people jobs and lift them out of scrapes.

The shiftings and siftings have also included replacement of Alberto Uriburu, forty-five-year-old son of the 1930 revolution leader, as Ambassador to Peru, a post he held before the June 4th coup. He is another prime example of the type sometimes spawned here—a director of Swift's Argentine subsidiary, as well as serving on the boards of both British and German firms.

Reaffirmation of Castillo's choices in ambassadorial posts show there's no revolution in foreign affairs. The future is too clouded for any crystal-gazing, but there are plenty of people here who think that this diplomatic clean-up completes the neutrality pattern and that there is not going to be any change.

OCTOBER 9th

For the third successive week Ramírez left the capital today for a trip into the interior, this time a mere 200-mile jaunt to the cattle-show town of Azul in Buenos Aires province. For a wonder he didn't decorate any Virgins—this is a joke and no irreverence. Ramírez rather carries his devoutness to excess, and is forever appointing Virgins in the various churches as Patron Saints and Generals in the Argentine Army.

OCTOBER 10th

Word is going round that our Ambassador Armour, now on his way back here, is carrying a personal message of regret and disappointment at Argentina's continued lone neutrality stand from F.D.R. to Ramírez. This, and Washington's firm belief that eventually things will get better are supposed to be the reasons why Armour has been allowed to return, despite the fact that there has been no change in the United States attitude toward the Casa Rosada policy.

In as strongly worded a pair of editorials as they've used in a long

time *Prensa* for the democrats and *Cabildo* for the Nazis rushed into the print ring this morning to intensify the bitter, under-cover struggle that is tearing Argentina today. *Cabildo* pledged allegiance to the June 4th revolution, contending they'd been fighting for it a long time and warning: "Any change in national policy would be both tragic and a crime." *Prensa*, in its editorial, sounded almost as if it had advance proofs of the opposition piece. Point by point it shattered all the nationalists' contentions that Argentina doesn't *really* have any treaty obligations to stand with the Americas. Recalling that Argentina herself was the author of many initiatives at previous conferences, *Prensa* adds: "The Castillo regime set Argentina on a course of neutrality . . . of isolation from her continental sisters. This policy is a negation of America."

The battle inside the Government is at white heat. These have been disquieting days and I note in looking back over my cables that perhaps I've been too preoccupied with the back-and-forth play of forces. But it is real and vital to people here. Perhaps not real and vital enough, considering the kind of dictatorship that may emerge, but at least important to the thousands of students who've been out on strike, to the families of those who've been secretly arrested and spirited away to concentration camps, to business men who find their activities pried into and hampered by excessive red tape, and to those many families who have sons in the Army and who now find it impossible to maintain harmony in their own ranks whenever politics are discussed. They are feeling the same things people in Germany felt, seeing the same steps being taken and slowly learning the same lessons—just how far their disinterest and their failure to take action when the time was ripe may lead them.

OCTOBER 11th

Have the workers enough strength to force the military to shift its position? Maybe. Yesterday's news is a good omen. The 20,000 packing-company laborers on strike for the past ten days have insisted they wouldn't return to work until so advised by plump and stolid José Peters, Secretary of their Union, whose arrest was fol-

lowed by his deportation to a concentration camp in far south Neuquen. On Saturday, alarmed by the continued hold-up of shipments to England and fearful that the precious meat contract might be affected, the Army—reportedly on orders of Perón—sent a special plane down to fetch him back. Yesterday he spoke to 25,000 workers in Avellaneda, advising them to return to work. Perón promised he would procure demanded salary increases as well as the liberation of certain leaders. Neither he nor the Government may mean to keep these promises, but it looks as though the workers are going to take them at their face value. Troops are still posted around the packing plants. In general, the public continues unaware of what is going on. "If we could only read your American papers," many have told me.

OCTOBER 12th

Columbus Day, the important *Día de la Raza* (Day of the Race) in Latin America. As usual, the Falangists and the nationalists have been using it to propagandize the ties between the world's two Latin neutrals. They re-argue the "necessity of Argentine continuance in the path of prudence," but nothing quite as spectacular as last year, when thousands of them jammed Luna Park, Buenos Aires' Madison Square Garden, and heiled and thundered in the nearest thing to a Sportspalast mass meeting ever seen in this hemisphere. Maybe now that their Army people are in command they don't think it's so necessary—or perhaps it wouldn't look so good outside.

Nacion, right on the heels of *Prensa*, came out this morning with a strong editorial re-demanding an Axis break. This afternoon a young nationalist tossed a small hand-made bomb into their fancy front office, while another smashed *Prensa's* window with an iron bolt. One explanation of all this is that the anti-Axis group of *coroneles* told the papers to let loose with blasts at neutrality, so that the Government, hearing their pleas, could then take appropriate action. The pro-Axis group, however, have been trying to set the stage their own way. They put up fanatic young nationalists to the job of screaming for neutrality and breaking newspaper windows, so that they can say: "See, the people will raise hell if we change." Things

are so touchy that troops have been ordered on the alert and all available forces in full war kit have been moved within easy reach of the capital for any contingency. Police have been especially active in the past few days. I hear reports of new arrests almost hourly. I suspect my phone is tapped, as do most other correspondents. Lines into all papers are also officially eavesdropped. One editor told me yesterday that the warnings about using care in what they print have been getting more and more severe. Among other things, strikes can't be mentioned, news of papers suppressed or suspended is forbidden and nothing can be said about troop movements or air activities. Such news, it is explained, "is of no interest anywhere, and the Press must limit itself to news that is interesting," meaning principally official handouts.

The plan on foot to kick Minister of War, General Edelmiro J. Farrell up to the Vice-Presidency and give his job to Perón, present Under-Secretary who is really running things anyway, is gaining.

Afraid I haven't been over-close to the political goings-on today. This is the day of the Annual American Community Picnic out at Dr. Fred Aden's Ward College in suburban Ramos Mejia. Free hot dogs by the yard, baseball between fathers and sons and apple pie *à la mode* on tree-shaded picnic tables are an annual Argentine treat that always makes me think of Fourth of July at home. Must have been 2,000 people out at the show, probably half of them *yanquis*; the others, Argentine parents whose kids go to this modern American school.

OCTOBER 13th

It is difficult to understand the workings of the military mind or to imagine the *coroneles*—for all Perón's book-browsing—as having any understanding of psychology. Their methods of restoring calm seem to me enough to disquiet the most lethargic of people. All day long the radio has been going with warnings against spreading false rumors. Stations have apparently been sent a whole series of fancily phrased blurbs which they must include after each program number. At one dial point you get them every fifteen minutes; on others as

close as two or three minutes apart. Since there are a whole series of these warnings—although they all say the same thing—curiosity is even further aroused as to just what it is they are trying to deny.

“Spreading rumors,” says one announcement, “is anti-patriotic; combat it energetically.”

“No nation in the world is leading a life more secure or free from real cause for fear during the tragic hour of humanity than this new land. Why, then, should you darken this heritage of the gods with baseless alarums?” (This announcement incidentally was suddenly withdrawn during the course of the day. Apparently someone spotted the fact that “heritage of the gods” was pagan, and should have been heritage from God. Bet some *militares’* faces are red!)

Stories of arrests of people who talked about the Government in cafés, on trolley cars and in buses are constantly bandied from mouth to mouth. Each teller makes the story go one better. One tale of which I can be quite certain is that of the Casa Rosada correspondent of one of the big papers, who phoned his buddy at police headquarters and asked if there was any information there about the rumors of certain Cabinet resignations. The police, not unexpectedly, had the line tapped. Within a few hours both were ordered to present themselves for arrest and were held for several days until released with a warning they won’t easily forget.

Rumors today have been rolling in thick and fast, so insistently and unpleasantly, you get the feeling anything might happen by nightfall. Yet everywhere one goes, the story is almost the same. Affable, able Finance Minister Dr. Santamarina, lone civilian in the Cabinet, only man trained for his job, and probably its most democratic figure, is supposed to be on the verge of resigning. In fact, he may already have quit. Smart, peppery General Anaya is reported to have fallen out with his GOU pals over the Axis question and may go out with Santamarina. Several other names, also mentioned, including Vice-Admiral Galíndez, who holds the Public Works portfolio and General Mason, from Agriculture. All are members of the moderation faction within the Cabinet, who not only favor saying, “To hell with the Germans once and for all,” but who don’t like Argentina’s more and more totalitarian stamp. Santamarina, with a banker’s mentality, believes obligations assumed by Argentina at various Pan-American conferences should be honored just like a

banknote. The others are partly influenced by such considerations, partly by the fact that since it is officially admitted Berlin can no longer win the war, it is unintelligent to stick to the loser.

About the end of August, we understand, the *coroneles* had another of their administrative sessions, and bouncy little Anaya had perked up, lit into them and told them their Administration had failed completely in its revolutionary aims. "Radical changes in the internal and external policies are necessary," he had stormed. That was the end for him. Anaya's Under-Secretary for Justice, Eugenio Burnichon, is reported under military arrest for having mentioned in the hearing of a young lieutenant that military dictatorships were often dangerous. The lieutenant reported to Gilbert, who gave the order of detention. Anaya heard about this and raised hell. Nevertheless, a court martial was quickly summoned and found Burnichon guilty. How far this Hitlerite system of arresting their own colleagues can or will be carried on is hard to tell, but apparently if the violent faction gets the upper hand, it will force out its opponents somehow. They, in turn, will either have to take it, or stage a counter-move of their own—and any counter-move would be no cream-puff toss.

(Later)

All of Buenos Aires Jewish newspapers were closed by the police last night. I was busy rubbing myself with liniment after the father-and-son baseball game at the American community picnic and didn't hear about it until this morning, when I got a query from the office in New York, who learned it from the U.P. Spent most of today trying to find the inside story and discovered many pro-democratic leaders fear it may just be the start of other anti-Semitic measures. No reasons were given for the closures and both local papers and the press services have been ordered to make no mention or comment. The Army mind here isn't essentially anti-Semitic, but recently the Nazi-fascist sheets have been campaigning against the Jewish papers, calling them "communistic and inspired by Yankee-British imperialists, seeking to destroy Argentina's sovereignty." Nazi name-calling has a lot of influence, and the police simply went around to the *Diario Israelita*, which has been printed in both Yiddish and Spanish for twenty-seven years; to *Di Presse*, a big morning paper

only two years younger and especially noted for its liberal policy, and to the *Yiddish Zeitung*; ordered them closed until future orders. The *Diario*, which takes the U.P. news and the *Presse*, which carries the A.P., have long been strongly pro-United Nations, far more so in fact than most Gentile papers, and this, they feel, may be the real reason.

Argentina's Jewish population, estimated at about 400,000, mostly of Russian and North European stock, has noted an increasingly strong anti-Semitic tone in some of the recent measures taken by the Ramírez Government. Among them have been the closing of many Jewish religious schools, especially in provinces where Jewish colonial communities are established, and the prohibition of kosher killing in the municipal slaughter yards in Buenos Aires and in the important Jewish centers of Rosario and Basavilbaso in the province of Entre Rios.

OCTOBER 14th

Santamarina, Anaya and Galíndez have resigned. The official announcement made late last night said the resignation would be accepted, and added: "Whatever political significance that may be attributed to these actions, none of it affects the unity of the Government. On the contrary, these developments have originated with the object of contributing to the maintenance of the political trend of the country, powerfully sustained by H. E. the President of the Republic and repeatedly expressed on numerous occasions."

Nobody, of course, believes a word of this. The news has caused a sensation and people think the *puchero* bubbling under the surface for the past month is about to spill over. There are only three Cabinet portfolios filled. General Farrell is to be sworn in today as Vice-President, while still holding on to his War Ministry job. Finding replacements of standing isn't going to be easy, especially with the country in this state.

We hear that there was a period not so long ago when the *ministros* favored a break and enlisted Ramírez on their side within the GOU. They made the mistake of not striking while the iron was hot. An Axis break became more difficult as time went by and the

opposition gradually gained the upper hand. Hull's letter caused the pendulum to swing the other way, until Cabinet opinion was about equally divided and Ramírez for once held a balance of power. But the *coroneles*, especially Gonzalez in the Presidential Secretaryship, constantly kept the President under their thumb. Perón also stood by the forces aligned against any shifting of position and now the opposition seems liquidated. Up to now there has been a kind of armed truce between the battling elements, but who can tell what's next? Yesterday's news that Italy had declared war on Germany knocks the props from under the argument that Argentina couldn't take any measure that would put her in danger of finding herself at war with Italy. Perón continues personally calling the commanders of all the garrisons every night, making sure that they are still lined up with his group and are sworn to loyalty. *Coronel* Emilio Ramírez, more hard-boiled than ever as Chief of Police of Buenos Aires, also has his boys on the alert to prevent any demonstrations. And so, while Argentina might appear superficially calm, it is seething with an intense inner emotion. The pro-Nazis and the rightists can hardly conceal their joy at the resignations and have been doing what little demonstrating is outwardly visible. The mounted police squads park in front of my office building downtown about five in the afternoon each day, apparently certain there won't be any demonstrations until after working hours. Along Calle Florida the strolling crowds are so thick that it is hard to tell how anybody could do much demonstrating, but the police aren't taking any chances. The *coroneles* who are pulling the strings for Ramírez and who built him up so much that they couldn't very gracefully turn him down, have tried to prove how much support the Administration is receiving, whereas the undercurrent of dislike in the people's attitude toward the military is increasing. In some provinces the Government Interventors and their staffs are ostracized by the people. The provinces resemble occupied countries rather than free states. Here in Buenos Aires there is a move on foot to give the *militares* the same kind of treatment that the inhabitants of Belgium, Norway and occupied France gave the German soldiers—getting up and walking out when they enter cafés, sidling up to them, humming the national anthem and letting out especially on the words: "*Libertad, Libertad, Libertad.*"

An increasing number of Argentines are now reaching the point where they are saying, and meaning it, "The present situation can't go on. Either it must change or we will change it." That, it seems to me, is the most significant, vital fact to emerge here as a result of the past fortnight's events. The Cabinet crisis, following on the heels of the appointments of two of the strongest of the old-guard, neutrality-minded Castillo supporters to top Ambassadorial posts, plus the lack of any definite indication that the military plans to declare itself on the side of the United Nations has flamed counter-move talk to white heat.

Adding fuel to the flames is an important declaration, which suddenly appeared in this morning's papers signed by a group of 150 leaders who form a cross-section of Argentina's best brains and opinion. The statement is a resolutely worded declaration, demanding "effective democracy" and "loyal fulfillment of international obligations." The authors and signers have done a brave thing; their plea is brief but to the point:

The citizens signing the present declaration, who come from various sections of national life, consider it imperative that they should express the fundamental solution that is demanded by an immense majority of the Argentine people, and that represents at the same time a basis for ensuring the united and tranquil future of Argentina. We summarize this solution in the following terms: Effective democracy by means of the exact application of provisions of our national Constitution, and American solidarity through loyal compliance with international obligations signed by our country's representatives. Our country cannot and must not live outside the Constitution, or remain isolated from the other countries of America, or from those who throughout the world are fighting in the cause of democracy. We also believe that freedom of the press—an essential factor in our Constitutional regime—would afford public opinion an opportunity for a decisive renaissance of the fundamentals and principles here enunciated.

While carefully worded so as to avoid an outright request for a break, the inference was clear and the effect strong, especially since the signers affixed their names publicly. They included many anti-

Axis, pro-democratic leaders, among them two former Foreign Ministers: Adolfo Bioy and José Maria Cantilo, a number of former Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors, Senators and deputies, leaders in fields of learning, banking, industry, art and trade, literature and labor. Almost all political parties are represented. Only absentees being the nationalists, who are the Government's staunchest supporters.

I had been tipped off that the declaration was in preparation, but still it was a surprise to see it there in print. Drafted about a month ago, the intervening time was devoted to collecting signatures, not only in Buenos Aires but also in provincial centers like Rosario, Córdoba and La Plata. The contents were communicated to Ramírez by a committee of citizens who called on him last month, but their entreaties were disregarded, whereupon they decided to enlist the help of the newspapers. *Prensa*, *Nacion* and *Mundo* went ahead without asking authorization in advance, although they risked being closed down.

The declaration has broken at a decisive moment: The Government can show whether it means to pay some attention, either through its choice of Cabinet replacement or its attitude in general. Or it can lash back. Many prominent Argentines have expressed the views embodied in the manifesto, but generally in private. The fear of reprisals is strong and it is no hollow fear. The fact that the leading men and leading papers have been able to join forces is an excellent sign. They would hardly jail all of this group or close the three top papers, however furious they may be.

Many people regret the press itself has never before taken joint action in opposition to the more repugnant totalitarian features of the Government policies. They feel that a united stand—such as might have been taken many years past by the legendary Sarmientos and the Mitres—would have done much to check the lengths to which the *militares* now seem prepared to go. There is even talk that Ramírez may resign and General Farrell (who took the oath of office as Vice-President last night) move up. Rawson is supposed to be ready to fly back from Brazil to step in, and talk of civil war is in the air, aided in no small measure by those radio warnings against rumor-spreading or listening to reports from abroad, meaning both Uruguay and the United States.

Official stupidity is also partly responsible. The Presidential Press Office announced yesterday that Dr. Ernesto Aguirre, President of the Buenos Aires Stock Exchange, had called on Ramírez, following the announcement of the resignation of Santamarina from the Ministry of Finance, to “pledge support and promise closest collaboration.”

In a step practically unheard of previously, Dr. Aguirre walked out onto the balcony of the Exchange this morning and, over the public-address system, informed members that he had seen the President but for exactly the opposite reason—to express the pre-occupation and disquiet prevalent amongst traders over the forced dismissal of Santamarina, whose inclusion in the Cabinet on the formation of the Government had been instrumental in rallying much support not otherwise available. When they have to go to such lengths as resorting to outright lies in an effort to convince the people they have the support of influential elements, things look pretty black. The Aguirre denial has given official prestige another solar-plexus blow at a moment when it can least stand it.

(Later)

The closing of the Jewish newspapers has brought a sharp rebuke from President Roosevelt. I saw the Washington dispatch in the wire-service offices late this afternoon, and it is still being held up. No one knows whether it can be published here tomorrow. F.D.R. said that while the matter was of course one which primarily concerned the Argentine Government and people, he “could not forbear from expressing misgivings at the adoption in this hemisphere of action obviously anti-Semitic in nature, and of a character so closely identified with the most repugnant features of the Nazi doctrine,” adding: “I believe that this feeling is shared by the people of the United States and of the other Latin-American Republics. In this connection I recall that one of the resolutions adopted at the Eighth International Conference of American States at Lima, in 1938, set forth that any persecution on account of racial or religious motives, which might make it impossible for a group of human beings to live decently, is contrary to the political or judicial systems of America.”

If the Government doesn't keep that from its own people, it will

have a strong effect. The military has already lifted the ban on the papers, possibly having been tipped off that F.D.R.'s statement was on the way. The rather peculiar reasons given for the closures are that the papers were printed in Hebrew and Russian and that they were difficult for the censors to read. Another story is that the police had orders to close up all Russian papers, since they were automatically suspected of being communist. The Nazis derogatorily term Argentine Jews *rusos* (Russians) so the police merely went round and shuttered them all. The official announcement also alleged the local censors had to be able to read non-Spanish editorials in all papers. Since the Jewish dailies—like all others here, including three in Japanese—have for a month been printing editorials both in the original language and in Spanish, most people think the closures were simply anti-Semitic measures, taken in the belief no one would be really concerned. Of course, even pro-democratic Argentines, whose national pride is hurt in face of these occurrences and the strictures from abroad, carefully point out that there is more anti-Semitism in the United States than there has ever been in Argentina. Until now Argentine hotels, clubs, etc., have never gone in for “restricted clientele” or any of the other barriers often found in the United States.

OCTOBER 16th

The Argentine Presidency—meaning the tight clique of colonels who are managing affairs, rather than Ramírez—today announced the appointment of two known pro-fascists, one of them a notorious anti-Semite, to the vacant Cabinet posts. And while they didn't say so directly, the sudden announcement in effect constitutes the answer to the leading citizens who asked them to reconsider their policy and to F.D.R.'s statement decrying anti-Jewish actions. Selection of Dr. Gustavo Martinez Zuviria, better known under the pen name of Hugo Wast, for the Ministry of Justice and Education, and Cesar Ameghino as Minister of Finance, indicates as much as anything that the strong-arm, no-moderation group of the GOU intends to continue its present policy.

Roosevelt's statement, incidentally, has not yet been officially communicated to the Casa Rosada, since Ambassador Armour, who returned here a few days ago in the midst of all this excitement, has been unable to get an appointment with either Ramírez or Acting Foreign Minister Gilbert. The Buenos Aires papers were permitted to print F.D.R.'s remarks this morning but under small headlines on inside pages. In addition to naming Zuviria and Ameghino who, with Navy Captain Ricardo Vago, new Minister of Public Works, will be sworn in today, the Administration last night gave another highly significant indication of its point of view by issuing a statement attacking the civic and political leaders who the day before had dared to publicly sign their names to the pro-democratic manifesto. The Government's communiqué is worth repeating in full, for it is a perfect illustration of official mentality. It was sent to the papers with a letter signed by Press Censor Ladvocat, ordering publication "in preferred position and with striking presentation." It read:

A group of persons, attributing to themselves an inspired and non-existent representation, yesterday published a manifesto in certain newspapers requesting a fundamental solution of certain national problems. Invoking the name of the people, they omit to take into consideration whether the people, the authentic people, which, on June 4th, overthrew an intolerable regime, will tolerate being so invoked for mistaken ends and wrongful aims. The heterogeneous nucleus, composed, today, of politicians without hope and of inflamed ideologies, are not prepared to resign themselves to atoning in silence for their lack of loyalty to the country.

They make out that the Government should achieve in four months, that which . . . [they] could not, or would not, achieve. The people do not forget the authors of public calamities, although the persons referred to, play on the supposedly short memories of the popular masses. The revolution, conceived and carried out by the armed forces, with the nation's moral aid, will not allow, under any consideration, the return to the former regime to take place which is the wish of those who brought about the country's deplorable condition. It is particularly noteworthy that several of those who have signed the declaration addressed to Argentines, are foreigners, some of them born in remote regions. The problems inherent to the nation must be solved by the owners of the house, and not by the guests,

whatever may be the rights they invoke. Many of the signers, it may be added, are people of extreme leftist connections, as their anti-social and anti-Argentine activities—records of which existed in the official archives before the revolution—show. Some of them, even, have been acclaimed by communistic multitudes.

The Government is animated by an ample republican spirit precisely proved by the appearance of the manifesto referred to; but it will not tolerate any intromission, least of all, imposition, nor will it allow any polemics incompatible with the majesty of its representation. With all calm, it draws attention to the foregoing, so that all may know their duty, and be aware of possible consequence.

The holes in this statement are obvious to everybody here, especially the claim that the Government's "spirit" is shown by the fact that the statement itself could be published—forgetting that if it had been consulted, it undoubtedly would have turned thumbs down. But it makes certain the voice of the Argentine people is dead, that no opposition will be tolerated, and that Hitler's methods are in our hemisphere to stay so long as this Government remains in power.

This statement and the new Cabinet appointments are already drawing whoops of applause and bouquets from the fascist press. "Nothing could be more satisfactory," says *Pampero*, "now the second epoch of the revolution begins."

The facts I have been able to gather on the new appointees, and especially Zuviria, are sickening. Zuviria is tall, thin, wealthy and, while Argentina's most published author and one of Latin America's most widely translated novelist, is perhaps less known to the outside world as the concocter of some of the most vicious, anti-Semitic volumes ever printed in this hemisphere. In his early days he was a Deputy of the Progressive Democratic Party. But, as he begat more and more children (he has fourteen now) and wrote more books (his total is over thirty, mostly fiction; some in a kind of Ethel Dell style but timed in the epoch of Argentina's dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas), he turned more and more to the nationalists and became one of their brain trusters. I have three of his anti-Semitic books here: *El Kahal*, which has on its garish cover a vile snake stemming from Palestine and extending to Moscow and tries to prove Jews are the founders of "international communism"; *Oro*, dealing with a fictional

Mauricio Kohen, is another Streicher-style, Jew-baiting volume, while *El Sexto Sello*, published in 1941 is a more lengthy essay dealing with a "Jewish anti-Christ." Another novel, published in 1942 and titled 666, is less bitter than the others but is strongly anti-Jewish. *Clarínada*, leading anti-Semitic Argentine publication, frequently quotes Zuviria's writings. He served as Castillo's Interventor in the ex-President's native province of Catamarca and his aid to nationalist and anti-democratic organizations is well-known. During the Spanish War, his services to the Axis side were of such magnitude that they have since been cited in official histories published in Falangist Madrid. After the war, he became one of the leaders of the Ibero-American association set up by the Falange to cement the links between fascism in Spain and in Latin America. As Minister of Justice and Public Instruction, Zuviria's bailiwick will be the public schools, which already were headed down the totalitarian path by Castillo's Public Instruction Minister, pro-fascist Dr. Guillermo Rothe. And not only will Zuviria have the schools under his thumb but the courts and the movies. Three of his most popular novels (not the anti-Semitic stuff) have been put on the screen: *La Casa de los Cuervos*, *Valle Negro* and *Flor de Durazno*. The film industry fears that in his new job he will have the power to impose his venom on the industry. Aware of the regimentation already imposed in the radio fields, the film people are fearful they will be pounced upon next. As usual, the departure would probably be accompanied by the explanation that it is "destined to raise the cultural and artistic level" and, as with radio, "necessary because any medium which reaches so many people must be subjected to the strictest official control." Zuviria has already told friends he hopes to improve the literary quality of scripts and bring them in line with the official point of view. In the opinion of producers, this would amount—as it does in radio—to strict toeing of the line under threat of closer supervision.

Ameghino, who replaces the only previous civilian member of the Ramírez Cabinet, is a dried-up, dotty, fuddy-duddy, seventy-two-year-old; one-time Finance Minister in the rich, important province of Buenos Aires under super-nationalist Governor Fresco, who is now chief supporter of the fascist newspaper *Cabildo* and of the Nazi-aided nationalist movement.

President Roosevelt's sharp denunciation of the closing of the Jewish-language newspapers was allowed to appear this morning side by side with the announcement that the suspension had already been lifted. Public reaction is varied. Few people knew of the closings before F.D.R.'s comment, and the nationalists are trying to make it appear as if he is sticking his nose into Argentine affairs. One Nazi sheet in a blatant exhibition of anti-Semitism urges that Columbus Day should have been celebrated by lynchings of Jews. *Pampero* caricatured the corpses on the gallows in its worst exhibition of vulgarity, noting circumcisions on the victims as "proof of their barbarism."

OCTOBER 17th

The colonels must be boiling. Not merely content with publicly dressing down the signers of the pro-democratic manifesto, they issued an order late yesterday ordering all Ministries and Government departments to fire all employees, salaried or honorary, who signed the statement. Dismissals are to be made immediately. This will especially hit university professors whom Zúvira will be able to replace immediately, and many others who hold honorary positions. It is so like what happened in Germany that it is almost unbelievable.

"The manifesto," said the official order, "contains declarations incompatible with the honorable discharge of public duties. Signers must be dismissed from the service. This decision of the Government to apply to all. It is inadmissible for officials or employees of the State, who are obliged to give an example of obedience and fidelity, to take upon themselves faculties which are repugnant to administrative ethics and public morale. Neither is it acceptable that officials or employees of the State should pretend to correct, by means of collective declarations, the Government to whom they owe obedience by law, by decree and by their employment regulations. Nor is it possible to tolerate that they should support and express their solidarity with policies expressed by militant politicians. All the above actions on their part tend to perturb the general tranquillity which must be maintained by all means. The officials and employees of the State, are required to know their duties and obli-

gations, and when they forget them it is necessary to punish such disobedience, and place each one in his proper place and position."

The order was issued by Ministerial Secretary *Coronel* Gonzalez, who emphasized that he was "acting under instructions of His Excellency, the President." That has brought the only laugh of a bitter, bitter day here. If there is any ordering to do, it is certain the order is reversed. Streets today are heavily policed, with all squad cars out. As a precautionary measure, I learn, a General of the First Division and a colonel of the National Guard were arrested at the time of the Farrell appointment, which was a signal that a shakeup was coming. Young nationalists have been throwing tear bombs at buildings of pro-democratic institutions—their latest attempt has been to blacken the modern façade of Radio El Mundo. The police seem to be singularly asleep when these things are occurring. Understand El Mundo refuses to remove the stains, considering them honorable scars.

(Note)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a letter allegedly received from Dr. Moises Goldman, in connection with the lifting of the ban placed on the publication of Jewish newspapers. According to the Foreign Ministry, Goldman wrote that the "Delegation of Jewish Associations in Argentina"—known as the D.A.I.A.—"enjoyed the most ample guarantee of its rights and liberties"; was pleased with the rapid steps taken to return matters to a normal course and "confirmed the certainty that in Argentina there never has been, nor will there ever be, discrimination of a racial, religious or nationalistic order." Furthermore, Argentina's Jews, "in harmonious collaboration with all the inhabitants, have always carried out their activities as they are carrying them out today, without inconveniences or obstacles of any kind being placed in their path."

It should all make a great impression but actually, I learn, the declaration was secured under the implication that stronger measures would be taken if it were not issued. Sources which I consider absolutely reliable tell me that a delegation of the Association was summoned to the office of General Gilbert and, after being kept waiting more than three hours, were ushered in, given the draft of a

statement, and informed that it "might be advisable to sign." Gilbert minced no words in placing all of Argentina's Jews in two classes: the rich ones, who are "all usurers," and the poor, "all communists." "We," Gilbert said, "have been extremely lenient in our treatment of Jews," inferring this should be "appreciated." Some of the Jewish leaders present, I understand, felt that they had no alternative but to sign, despite the fact the statement constituted a rudeness to Roosevelt, whom they genuinely admire. The Jewish papers had asked the United States press services not to publicize the closings last week for fear the military might think they tried to bring in outside pressure which might result in reprisals. Even now that they have issued a public statement and made it appear, outwardly, at least, that everything is all right, some feel there is still trouble ahead.

OCTOBER 18th

What people here are saying, thinking and feeling can best be summed up in this way:

- 1) The people have turned against the Government. You gather that everywhere, among every class. Even those who a few weeks ago urged "wait and see" and "give them a chance," now say their eyes are opened. "We got gypped on the revolution," is about the English equivalent for the far stronger *criollo* expressions generally heard.
- 2) It can't last; something's bound to pop. Yet, there's a fear that it might last, as it lasted in Europe and elsewhere.
- 3) The lack of co-ordination between the pro-democratic forces in the country accounts for the fact that there are so many possibilities. And unfortunately it also makes the chances of effective resistance slim.
- 4) Comparisons with the dictatorships and with Hitler and Mussolini are now increasingly frequent. Yet people aren't blaming Ramirez directly. The talk is constantly of "they," meaning the GOV. Some call them Swastika-stamped; others term them super-patriots, who believe they have the self-appointed duty to save the country. The never-ending flow of decrees and regulations and regimentations has caused increasing dissatisfaction.

5) The forced resignations of leading *medicos*, educators, civil-service career men and others, who signed the pro-democratic manifesto, brought a terrific shock to the country; made the signers martyrs. So have the increasing stories about concentration camps shocked and stung people.

6) The way the Nazi-fascist press continues going, while pro-democratic dailies are closed day by day. Despite the radioed warnings about spreading rumors, the tapped telephones and unofficial mail censorship, you hear more rumors in a one-block stroll than the regime could deny in a month. Chain letters, secret publications, are on the increase. People are scared, but they talk anyway.

7) Many liberals are looking to the United States and to other Latin Republics for help or the kind of pressure the military will understand. They repeat that they don't want big-stick Marines or anything like interference, but they can't understand why the rest of the hemisphere doesn't "do something."

8) Even if there is an outright break with the Axis, people feel it alone won't mean anything. They say: "All that would do would be to take the eyes of the world away from Argentina and permit our new home-style fascism to grow stronger in the dark."

9) Fear of Brazil's growing armed might, which was repeatedly said to have been one of the reasons for the military take-over, isn't worrying the people. Air-raid drills during the past week, the thousands of posters stuck up around town showing a bombed widow, babe-in-arms under the legend, "Meditate and Prevent" are laughed off, and regarded as another move to scare people into a desire to hold on to neutrality.

(Later)

Argentina's Good Neighbors, led by Colombia, are planning some kind of collective action, trying to push this country off the fence. Trotting around to some of the Latin-American Embassies during the last few days, I've gathered something of the story. Apparently a few days ago the Colombian President sent a note to Ramírez, expressing the hope that Argentina now planned to join the other Republics of the hemisphere in a policy of solidarity and co-operation. At the same time, he advised his hemisphere colleagues. Some of

them have already sent notes joining in the appeal. This move seems to be an entirely Latin-American affair, although there's no doubt that it will have Uncle Sam's approval and support. From what I can gather, it isn't very likely, however, that all the American Republics will really be able to unite in deciding what action should be taken. Many a Latin Republic isn't one quarter as democratic as we'd like to think. Besides, Pan-American solidarity has never before had a problem child quite as difficult to handle as Argentina, and one of the GOU's basic plans is to try and unite her Good Neighbors in a Latin bloc against the States.

OCTOBER 19th

Maybe civil war . . .

That is the word you catch everywhere in Buenos Aires today, despite repeated warnings about spreading rumors, the obviously tapped telephones and the hush-hush attitude in front of uniforms, unknowns, or anybody you just don't like. General strike talk is in the air, students are already out throughout the country, and the regime, pushing its totalitarian, anti-Semitic Minister of Justice and Education, Martinez Zuviria, to the fore, has made public a letter which isn't going to make the students any calmer. Replying to Rodriguez Martinez, Rector of the University of Cordoba, who had sent down an appeal asking whether he was really supposed to fire all his professors who had signed the pro-democratic manifesto, Zuviria said: "At a moment when this Government, interpreting the sentiments of the Argentine people, is making every effort to safeguard national sovereignty and maintain those traditional friendships with the peoples of the world which our Constitution requires of us, these isolated voices are raised to create disquiet and disunity. They seek to make those who are not properly informed regarding our international pacts believe Argentina has neglected to keep her commitments, obliging her to intervene in the war. Apart from the falsity of such assertions—because no such undertaking exists—this attitude is obviously contrary to the policy of the Government, which has frequently announced its position. This [signing the manifesto]

is an inadmissible act of indiscipline on the part of those who held professorships, or held responsibility as public officials. The country has been preserved from war by the workings of Divine Providence, and we should show ourselves worthy of the privileges which have made of our land an oasis of peace in a world of war."

The manner in which Zuviria and the *coroneles* for whom he speaks blandly ignore the fact that they are repudiated by Argentine citizens of all classes, shows how the Administration dwells in its ivory tower, surrounded by rosy clouds of wishful thinking. More and more resignations are being handed in by career men in official life, especially in the big Federal banks which have done so much for Argentina's prestige in international finance. That will obviously provide new vacancies for the appointment of nationalists to Government jobs.

Students at the Facultad de Medicina rioted today. There were several arrests; many people injured. Since such news is forbidden, police have refused to give figures of those detained or hurt. If students and labor could get together they'd be a real threat, and civil war against the military may become a reality.

Here's a side note with an ironic twist. By the votes of Judges Nicholson, Speroni and Berutti, the Court of Criminal Appeal yesterday dismissed charges brought by the District Attorney against twenty of the committee members of the Federation of German Cultural and Benevolent Societies, a top Nazi cover-up group, which formerly operated as the German National-Socialist Workers' Party. The whole bunch were arrested, following an investigation by the since-dissolved Congressional Committee probing anti-Argentine activities. The Committee couldn't get them on charges of being Nazis, so it used a variation of J. Edgar Hoover's old stunt, naming fraud and embezzlement instead of income-tax-evasion charges. The facts were laid before Justice of Instruction Vazquez. He held the evidence presented was sufficient to justify arrest and conviction, declaring the *Federacion* had enlisted members and collected cash under false pretences. Today's reversal knocks all that out. It even carried a rider to the effect that the proceedings did not affect the good name or honor of the accused. All those who contributed to the Nazi societies said the Appeals Court knew full well that their cash was going over to help Hitler. Therefore they were not cheated

by talk of charity. And now the Nazi organizations who use the charity gag as a cover-up can go merrily on, even though practically all Argentine pro-democratic groups have been closed.

OCTOBER 20th

Mustachioed Dr. Palacios, my favorite Argentine personality, has dared the *coroneles* managing this regime to reveal the extent to which they are prepared to use force to impose their will and intention of reshaping the country along totalitarian lines. He has refused orders to dismiss members of the faculty of the University of La Plata, of which he is Rector (in addition to being socialist leader and long-time Senator). Palacios' letter to Zuviria, replying to his dismissal instructions, is a classic.

"With all the respect which your Excellency deserves of me," Palacios sarcastically began, "I must state that both my position and my concept of dignity prevent me from executing this order . . . As Rector of this University my law is that of the University. I have taken the oath to the professors who elected me to this chair and to whom I am responsible to uphold that law. The Government is empowered to appoint professors and dismiss them, but each case must have the express consent of the faculty. The men whose dismissal you indicate have not been judged or even accused. . . . The law provides that the University Rector and Council have the supreme authority over the University in teaching, disciplinary and administrative matters. . . ."

Then, quoting several similar precedents in which the Federal authorities sought to interfere in university affairs, each resulting in an admission that the Government was in the wrong and dropping the case, Palacios added: "I understand perfectly well that the Minister of a Government which can arbitrarily propose any measures it deems convenient, could address me in such a matter as this. However, as Rector of the University, I have no other recourse but that of the law. I am primarily an educator and I have just told my students, quoting the words of Bergson, that the educator is a creator of actions, a shaper of moral trends, not merely a soulless func-

tionary. My dignity as an educator, does not pertain to me personally, it is an example I owe to youth."

Naturally, not a line of this can appear in any paper; in fact, Colonel Ladvoat, who consistently keeps calling his censorship "collaboration," learned in advance of Palacios' reply and sent an immediate order to all papers and radio stations forbidding the publication or broadcasting of any document over Palacios' signature. Still, there were plenty of copies around town last night and today, run off by students and underground presses, adding to the civil-war talk. Ironically enough, the Palacios' letter got around just about the same time as a Presidential statement ostensibly promising re-establishment of the Constitution and urging faith in the Government. Palacios' letter has already caused a walkout of practically all the 8,500 students at La Plata University, and Palacios himself will probably resign, if he hasn't done so already. A student at La Plata, who doubles in journalism on the side, tells me that the students are all organized in groups (not overlooking the anti-Palacios, nationalist students, who naturally support the Government). They are running the cops ragged in the modernish Capital of the Province of Buenos Aires, where the school is located. The pro-Palacios undergrads have been distributing leaflets, organizing picketing groups, and getting ready for anything that may come.

Up in Corrientes and Sante Fe, the *universitarios* are also raising hell. In Cordoba the Administration's measures have resulted in battles with the police and, when the Provincial Minister of the Interior, a civilian, was told by Buenos Aires to get tough, he resigned. The opposition nationalist student group, the Sindicato Universitario, has been scrapping with members of the pro-democratic University Federation; classes have been broken up and so far thirteen have been wounded and thirty-five arrested in Buenos Aires. When the police tried to smash one strike meeting at the University of Economic Science where repairs were going on, the students grabbed rocks. So did the cops, and there was a "row bottom," just like those at the new University of Pennsylvania or up in New Haven in the old days. It was half an hour before the students returned to the sidewalk cafés and continued meetings under the guise of coffee drinking. Today strike bulletins are even being handed out, and the cops have started searching houses looking for strike leaders, who

promptly faded underground. Labor is also gaining support and the general strike may actually come off.

OCTOBER 20th (*Later*)

Today the radio suddenly let go a bombardment of announcements about the telephone and the use to which it should be put, announcements so strange that I was thoroughly mystified. The inside story, amusing in some ways, desperate in others, is another page out of the story of the Nazi-occupied lands. The telephone, said the announcement, is a social instrument at the service of humanity. (Ladies please note: no long confabs about each pin the dressmaker had or had not to stick in on the *godet*, the *jabot*, the ruffles and flounces of "my new model.") No—and this is direct quote—the telephone's use "may not be abandoned to the thoughtless or irresponsible. Employing the telephone to insult or offend is a crime which deserves punishment by justice. The Department of Posts and Telegraphs will punish with cancelation of telephone service anyone who may use the phone to disturb the peace, and Federal Justice will apply to all violators the full rigor of the Penal Code to anyone who dares tamper with communications."

There is also a warning to "persons who believe that, cloaked in anonymity, they preserve themselves from the long arm of justice, and in that belief insult or badger other people. But such persons are grossly in error, because the long arm of the law and the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, watch over the use of the telephone, that its noble social purpose should not be misused. Such irresponsible criminals will be punished and their names published in the press."

There are many variations on the same theme. It seemed absurd to me that the *Gestapo* should have so little intelligence as to bruit the fact abroad that they have been tapping. However, the explanation is simple. It seems that for some time past, pro-democrats have been carrying on a telephone campaign directed against the military. Using the entire Army list, they would dial the numbers of high-

ranking officers, inquiring for them by name. Asked for their own names, they would give that of some younger officer acting under the orders of the very one they were telephoning. Once the colonel, major or captain was on the line, the dialogue would go something like this:

Unknown: Colonel Perez?

Colonel Perez: Speaking. What do you want, lieutenant?

Unknown: *Constitucion, Democracia, Libertad!*

Then the caller would immediately hang up the receiver, leaving the colonel unable to trace the call. The promoters of this campaign were careful to put their calls through from public stations with which Buenos Aires abounds. The stunt had been very well organized and carried out. Officers were subjected to a virtual persecution. Their families were also driven crazy and the thing reached such a pitch that a campaign of frightening the offenders had to be started.

People are now more than ever afraid to use their telephones. For some time they have suspected and some even had the certainty that lines had been tapped. Not long ago there was a semi-public row between the Casa Rosada and the General Post Office, both of which wished to control the tapping. Eventually the Casa Rosada had to order the General Post Office to discontinue its own eavesdropping and today's warnings should put the public on guard officially—it is a secret no longer.

OCTOBER 21st

I'd give my right typewriter to really be on the inside at one of those secret GOU sessions. So would a good many other correspondents and, even more, so would a lot of the non-colonels in the Army and plenty of Argentines. But even though the meetings are strictly hush-hush, locked-door affairs, news does manage to leak out. In this town, even more than in Washington, everybody has a friend, who has a cousin, who has a brother-in-law of someone on the inside. Ordinarily, knowing how Washington gossip grows, this inside stuff sounds suspicious, if not downright impossible. Yet here in Buenos Aires I've learned—not without a good deal of trial and error, it is true—that certain local sources are right at least 75 percent of the

time. Considering the touch-and-go situation that is darn near phenomenal. The only news you get from the Government, either on or off the record, are the official handouts and the self-serving declarations that some of the *militares* are willing to let out. As a result, most of us have just about stopped attending any Government press conferences, or even trying to contact officialdom for news.

Newsgathering, therefore, has become a kind of reverse process. Initial chore in the morning is to read the papers—not the big reliable papers first, but the Nazi-fascist sheets. For there are more good slants on how the Government really thinks and what it plans to do in the columns of the swastika-stamped rags than in the democratic dailies. When *Cabildo* and *Pampero* called for Storni's head, the chances were much better than a two-peso ticket at Palermo that Storni would walk the plank. Once the papers are checked, we start on the morning round of trying to pick up and corroborate unprinted information. Like every other correspondent here, I have my stable of sources. There is X., a strong nationalist, who has a secret weakness for American jazz. If this were known to his fellow Nazis it would probably get him read out of the party, but I pass him hot jive and he passes me hot dope, and we're both satisfied. It's the damndest way of swapping news that I ever heard of, but it seems to me that I recall that the boys who covered the big events over in Japan and in Germany often used the same kind of stunt. There's Y., an Austrian refugee, who fled Hitler ten years ago and who only rarely betrays the fact that he isn't a native-born *criollo*. Not only does he have a swell knack for sponging up information, but, knowing what happened in Europe, he is able to draw the invaluable comparisons. There's A., an Argentine with one of the big news agencies, who, because he can't send out the stories himself is so good a newspaperman and friend that he is willing to give out with everything—or practically everything—he has heard. Colonel Z., who is not one of the important Colonels, but who nevertheless manages to pick up a great deal of information in his sub-ministry, is another *caballero* to whom I'd like to toss bouquets. Although he's not expressly *verboten* to talk to foreigners, as were Nazi or Japanese officers, it probably wouldn't get him any better with his superiors. His help and that of others like him is not so much of value for the direct tips, as for the slant on what is coming in a general way and

the meaning of what has already passed. There are my friends the Argentine newsmen, some former legislators and the Latin diplomatic corps; there are the long-time *políticos*, the sub-officials who really believe in democracy but who feel their hands tied, and others.

This regime also gives itself away in the reaction it arouses among the people. I don't mean taxi drivers, or barbers, who always seem to be the correspondent's inevitable ear-to-the-grounders, but people in general. When an important new decree pops, for example, nobody is allowed to comment openly. The papers are hushed up, the radio is told exactly what to say, but Argentines talk anyway. And the correspondents with eyes and ears who write for the outside world and who still have ways and means of getting out their stories, can look and listen, put down what they have seen and heard, and pass it along to papers that still dare to print what they consider the truth.

General Gilbert, who was a colonel before he pushed himself up, and who originally was one of the top trio in the GOU, has apparently lost out in the inner-office battle and is going to become permanent Foreign Minister. He will be sworn in tomorrow evening. Tall, balding, eagle-beaked fifty-one-year-old Brigadier General Luis Cesar Perlinger, up to now little-mentioned GOU man, is going to take over Gilbert's old job as Minister of the Interior. Perlinger is considered a Perón follower, and Gilbert's upstairs kick to the Foreign Ministry apparently means he is being pushed out of the way. The Foreign Office—now that Argentina seems to have made up her mind definitely to stick on the fence, isn't really tremendously important. The Interior job, which Perón wanted to get a stooge to handle, is another story. Interior controls much spending, job handling and the important local police, all communications and everything that relates to politics. Perlinger is one of the youngest generals in the Army. He entered military school when he was seventeen, graduated in 1910, and from then on his promotion was rapid. He became a member of the Argentine General Staff in 1924, subsequently commanded the 12th Infantry Regiment and later bought arms abroad. He became a Brigadier General last August. Don't know about his ideology, but the important thing is that he's a Perón man.

It gets more and more like Nazi Germany every day. In the last few days scenes such as those which occurred in Germany when the Nazis ordered out non-conforming professors have become frequent. The farewell lectures of those dismissed for signing the pro-democratic manifesto have brought lumps to many throats, resentment to many hearts, and students in more and more schools are already on strike in protest. Anything might happen, for these undergraduates are no shy violets. Hundreds of students, fellow *medicos* and professors crowded the operating theatre in an obscure corner of the old School of Medicine building in Buenos Aires day before yesterday to hear world-famous Professor B. A. Houssay, his eyes tear-filled, deliver his final lecture. In his white research gown, his hands folded on the lectern before him, he spoke slowly and deliberately, making no reference to the twenty-five work-filled years which have brought him honors from Europe, the United States and all over the world. He spoke only of muscular reflexes, and avoided politics, but everyone hung on the words of this distinguished scientist, head of Argentina's Institute of Physiology, unable to understand why his love of democracy could be punished in this way. In closing, he said: "And now I have delivered my last lecture. . . . The next must come from a colonel."

Hundreds of other students and educators crowded the final lecture delivered by Professor Alejandro Ceballos, famed for his work in research on cancer of the lungs. He too will have to leave his medical post because he dared to speak against dictatorship. Hours before Dr. Mariano Castex was to give his last lecture in the Hospital Nacional de Clinicas, the hall was crowded. When he stepped in it was to the kind of silence that could be felt. Dr. Castex spoke in an almost detached way of his work in surgery here and abroad, experiments which brought Argentina fame and renown. His name is a household word in Argentina, a guarantee of the most skillful and advanced medical attention. Moreover, he belongs to a family whose word and influence have carried weight for something like a century. At his mother's table, and later at his own, top *politicos* were wont to sit down elbow to elbow with scientists, authors, wits, Society with a big S, and everything most representative of the best

in Argentina. Ideas born in that heavily draped, panel-fitted dining room, have later borne fruit in developments in every branch of activity in the country. Castex was not only a life-saver to his patients, but a guide, a mentor and helping hand to people from every walk of life. The treatment he has received has fallen like a bomb-shell in drawing room, club room and patio.

There have been other famous names similarly affected: Dr. Nicolas Romana, Dr. Juan T. Lewis, Dr. Rafael Augusto Bullrich, and Dr. Anibal Villa, all at the Facultad de Medicina.

Medicos and *profesores* are not the only victims of official fury. Maestro Juan José Castro, Argentina's foremost composer and conductor, who not so long ago conducted Toscanini's N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, up in New York, has been dismissed from his posts as Director of the Conservatorio Nacional and the Colon Opera, and has been forbidden to enter the theatre even if he buys his own ticket! Top-ranking attorneys, physicists, social scientists, engineers, etc., have been ousted. Juan Carlos Palacios has resigned the Presidency of the Argentine Sports Federation and the Olympic Committee. The Government has even gone so far as to boot out members of Commissions named to collect funds for erection of mausoleums to distinguished personages; even of a Commission to erect a monument to an obscure lieutenant general.

Some of these *rejects* have already received offers from abroad, but I understand the *coroneles* are so burned up that they have decided to forbid any to leave the country. At his press conference yesterday, Colonel Ladvocat had a remarkable reply to some guarded suggestions by local newsmen that eminent scientists like Professor Houssay were irreplaceable. "No one is irreplaceable," he snapped. "There are plenty of clever young men to step into the shoes of such disaffected *hombres* as these!" Berlin seems to have moved to Buenos Aires.

OCTOBER 23rd

Trouble at the University of La Plata may be the fuse to touch off the Argentine time bomb. Dr. Palacios resigned as La Plata's Rector yesterday. He presented his resignation to the Vice-President, Dr. Gabriel Mazo, at a special faculty meeting. No sooner did Mazo

accept than he, too, promptly resigned. The Senior Counsellor, Dr. Vittorio Monteverde, was invited to assume the Presidency. "Not for me," he said. "I quit too." Next in line was Dr. Juan Lindquist of the Agricultural School. "Include me out," he said, in effect, and handed in his own resignation. Then, like the ten little soldiers who stood on the fence, there was only one left, nationalistic Dr. Ricardo Labougle, a brother of the Interventor of the University of Buenos Aires. It was the chance he had been waiting for. Jumping in post haste, he accepted: "In keeping with my life-long policy, which has never allowed me to evade responsibility, I take the job." When he tried to speak to the students, however, he was received with rotten eggs and firecrackers. He had to be seen home by a police guard.

The lines are sharply drawn at La Plata, for, besides pro-democratic students there are plenty of nationalists. This may be the beginning of the popular, civilian resistance.

More and more of the dismissed *medicos* are receiving offers of teaching posts from across the Rio de la Plata, in Uruguay, and from Mexico and Chile. Some are apparently to be allowed to go, seemingly because they might cause trouble here. Others, like professors in Germany, are refusing to leave, believing they can do more here to help their country when the moment comes.

Over in Santiago, the Biological Society and a group of thirty-six Chilean university professors telegraphed Dr. Castex, calling his dismissal "an act offensive to the most sacred human rights—freedom of expression." Another group of Chilean professors pledged support to Dr. Gumersindo Sayago, of the University of Cordoba. Booklets are being sold in Chile, containing an open letter to General Ramírez which readers are to sign and mail. The letter demands freedom for political prisoners in Argentina. Proceeds of the sale will go to a fund to help those arrested. Nothing like that can be tried here.

OCTOBER 24th

The regime is getting touchier and touchier about possibilities of trouble from the universities. The Argentine University Federation, the autonomous central body for university administration which includes student and faculty delegates, has been ordered dissolved.

"It lacks all legal standing," says the official decree. "The ends pursued . . . have been proven subversive. It is known the Federation maintains close relations with the communists, as can be proved by the Police records." The Education Ministry has also ordered that all Federation representatives on student boards may be considered to have ceased to hold office. "All projects undertaken by them, or by boards on which they are represented, shall be adjudged null and void." Thus, the one organization which did as much as anything to give Argentina's universities their standing, independence and prestige, is pen-stroked out.

The student question is certainly confused. The Ministry of Public Instruction says undergrads must continue to attend classes but warns severe measures will be taken if any attempt is made to create disorder. At the same time, Dr. Labougle, the last ten-pin to remain standing at La Plata grasping for the job which no self-respecting pro-democratic teacher would take, has signed an order closing classes. He blandly stated that, "Since studies have proceeded normally throughout the whole of the year, courses are concluded somewhat earlier than anticipated; consequently students and professors may return home to better prepare for the final exams."

Prensa's editorial this morning must mean something is in the wind. Protesting against any attempt to introduce religious intolerance in Argentina, it cites a circular issued by the Interventor in the Province of Tucumán, saying, among other things: "Children must be taught that America (presumably Latin America) must realize its destiny within the framework of Catholicism. Anything outside Catholicism is not American." Consequently Protestantism and all other religions are not American. *Prensa* commented that everything that spells love of freedom, of right and of justice was American. Exclusions and false doctrines take Argentina backward, the paper went on, even if, as in the present case, it was carried out only in one single province. There are indications the military plans a closer official tie-in with the Church as in Franco Spain. Along the same lines, news comes from Entre Rios province, whose Interventor is Ramírez' brother, that charters granted Jewish and Masonic Mutual Aid and Welfare Associations will not be renewed. As soon as they expire, the organizations are apparently to be closed down. And that looks like only the beginning.

I hear more and more about the possibility of economic sanctions against Argentina, sanctions possibly strong enough to shake the regime from power. They are being considered, not simply because Argentina (which depends upon foreign trade for her very life) insists upon going her own neutrality way, or even because many believe the new military Government is fascist. That's still rated an internal affair. But the fact that the Nazis are getting more and more advantages through Argentina's open door is causing Washington to feel that now may be the time for a real crack-down. The States, I understand from banking people here, is considering freezing Argentine credits, just as credits of Axis-occupied and neutral European countries were frozen. The story behind it is somewhat complicated and it took a lot of unraveling, but this is the way it shapes up:

Last week's resignation of Finance Minister Santamarina, was followed a few days later by the forced quitting of Dr. Raul J. Prebisch as General Manager of the Banco Central de la Republica. A half-dozen of Argentina's top financial brain-trusters, all of them anti-Axis, also walked out. The Banco Central is the Argentine equivalent of our Federal Reserve; issues Argentina's money and was long trusted by Washington with the vital task of co-operating in the handling of decisive details of what material should be sent to Argentina and who should get it. Despite Castillo, and until now under Ramírez, the Bank and Prebisch have been democracy's best friends in Argentina. They aided in obtaining information which brought about the blacklisting of many Nazi cover-up organizations and assisted in tying the hands of such Nazi financial agents as the Banco Germanico and the Banco Aleman Transatlantico, which, although closed almost everywhere else in the Americas, still operate freely in Argentina. With democracy's friends out and the Ministry in the hands of pro-fascist Dr. Ameghino, Washington and the pro-democratic Good Neighbors are now said to feel they can no longer be reasonably certain our products don't get into Nazi hands, or that the Axis won't be able to manipulate back and forth across the South Atlantic as it pleases, piling up hidden funds, exerting powerful pressure and cornering war-vital necessities to keep them from the United Nations. England, which has among the most

important foreign trade and financial interests in Argentina, is believed to have figured it out the same way.

So long as it did not aid the enemy, the broad United Nations policy toward Argentina has been to sell everything short of arms, because we needed her meat and wheat and other products. This, our own and the British Embassies have always insisted, is not appeasement but a necessity of war. With the situation now changing, sanctions may be the only answer. Vichy, for example, is supposed to be using Argentina for its base of operations in this hemisphere and information has been gathered that funds passed to Argentina have reached the Bank of Dresden. Immobilizing funds would probably cause plenty of inconvenience to Argentine citizens or residents in their negotiations with the States. They would have to accumulate a terrific amount of proof to demonstrate that their operations were in good faith and would not benefit the Axis. The United States presently exercises control of funds entering and leaving the country, but up to now they have been blocked only when authorities have definite proof the questioned transactions would aid the Nazis. If freezing is put into force, the burden of proof would be on Argentina, and her business with the States and England would immediately zoom down. Of course reprisals might follow and a back-and-forth struggle begin. Local business, which trusted Prebisch and the other top shots, was upset by the resignations and even more by the talk of possible sanctions. They're not overly impressed by Ameghino, or promises made a week ago that the principal job of his Ministry will be to obtain the "full benefits of the country's many sources of production" and trying to encourage more internal trade and markets.

OCTOBER 26th

This regime has so many decrees to issue that they come popping out at all hours. But the beauty they sprung on the local newsmen at 1 A.M. today set an all-time high. The papers were suddenly notified that Colonel Emilio Ramírez had resigned as Chief of Police of the Capital of Buenos Aires. No reason, of course. Coming at this

moment, with student and labor strikes on the increase and with the whole country resembling a barrel of T.N.T., it might mean anything. Colonel Ramírez is one of the GOU'ers who doesn't believe in subtle methods, and the story around town today is that he was particularly burned up at the appointment of Brigadier General Perlinger to the Ministry of the Interior. Perlinger, who follows his leader Perón's iron-hand-in-the-velvet-glove technique, is, in effect, over Ramírez, although the Colonel is another one of those officers who have lots more power than their supposed bosses. One story is that the GOU asked Colonel Ramírez to step out because he was responsible for several blunders that brought particularly unfavorable comment from the outside world, especially the quickly rescinded closing of the Jewish press a fortnight ago. My guess is that he wants a showdown on his scheme for a Federal police force which he will run.

The nationalists are still busy. They planted a small bomb in the home of Dr. Federico Pinedo, pro-democratic former Finance Minister, this morning. The Pinedo clan was fortunately away.

Resignations of university people are on the increase. Several new ones reported today. Students are refusing to take exams. Palacios has accepted a Chair at Havana University.

OCTOBER 27th

The War News from Italy is sounding better and better to Argentina's three million Italian-born or Italian descendants. Free Italians are also making considerable progress in lining up more and more support, but while they are allowed to issue their weekly paper *Italia Libre*, they have to be extremely careful in other ways lest they offend the Government. In the last war some 40,000 Argentine-Italians volunteered to fight in Italy's Army; in this, until the overthrow of Mussolini, only one.

Somehow the town doesn't look the same these days. New regulations, supposedly designed to conserve fuel, electricity and rubber, have been put into force during the past few weeks. Result: Buenos Aires, probably the last world capital without a dim-out, curfews, rationing and other restrictions, is beginning to get a feeling that maybe there *is* a war on. At first the movie closing hour was set at 11:30 P.M., but that's already been moved up to midnight on weekdays and 12:30 on Saturday, Sunday and *fiesta* nights. Because of the late dining habit, napkins are rarely tucked in till 9 P.M. and those out for an evening generally dine even later. Theatres on Corrientes and Lavalle are losing business and the turning off the big electric signs has certainly changed the appearance of the downtown section.

Shops which formerly kept open until eight, drawing the heaviest trade of the day in the last two hours because of the Latin custom of the after-office *paseo*, have also been affected. On even days of the month, shops on the even-number side of the street must close at 6:30 P.M., others an hour later. The *senoras* are having God's own time trying to figure whether the Salon de Beauté on Calle Esmeralda is a Tuesday and Thursday establishment, or a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. As is so characteristic of *Argentinos*, this shopping "rationing" has merely provoked a loud ha-ha. If even a popular Government had put it into force it would have aroused their derision, but coming from *Palito*, it is just another nose-perk intrusion into the even rhythm of their lives. Regulating traffic is also getting lots of attention. Buenos Aires is still the only big city without traffic lights; people always laughed them away.

Have been looking into the local theatre situation, not only because I've always been batty on the subject of footlights (I once had ambitions of being an actor) but because I believe it is an important but vastly neglected phase of our own propaganda activities here. Although twenty-one legitimate theatres are currently running, giv-

ing Buenos Aires third place among world capitals in the number of lit houses, not one United States show or translation is appearing on local boards. The present theatre season is one of the best in years, but the uncooperative attitude of United States authors' rights societies, the lack of local agents to handle deals and the failure of those agencies responsible to do anything, have developed a situation whereby European imports and national works cover the entire field. There is a potential market for translations of Broadway successes second only to London's West End. But Latin Americans who in recent years have voluntarily tried to switch from Europe to the United States have been slapped down so many times that many have grown tired of the effort. As a result they still turn toward Europe. A high percentage of the plays produced here, in Rio and in Santiago are translations, although local authors are doing better and better year by year. Franco Spain and even Vichy France have felt it worth while to keep up these contacts, despite war, and both are represented by current hits. While a number of United States successes have been put on during the year, among them *No Time for Comedy* and *There's Always Juliet*, the total number is extremely small, considering the size of the theatre-going audiences. I have had no end of translators and people in the show business here use my shoulder to cry on with a long and generally baffling story of what happens when they write to New York to get an O.K. to put on some current success. When answers come, they frequently demand conditions impossible for this market. Result is that honest adaptors have often turned, and continue to turn to Europe. The less scrupulous simply lift ideas and hand them out as their own and the United States both fails to get the royalties and the propaganda content inherent in many Broadway successes today.

The propaganda factor is naturally important, although we don't like to talk too much about it here, especially now. Theatre men have told me that many United States works which pack a solid message would be just as effective here and do fully as much as Hitler films to sell democratic ideas, but there's no agency that comes up to what blacklisted Axis agent José Giacompol does for the Axis. There has been talk of a hemisphere conference of playwrights, agents and authors' societies to knock down the chief obstacles preventing production of Broadway plays here, and at the same time

opening the eyes of North American producers to possibilities in these capitals. Don't know why it is we so often do things the hard way. If we made United States plays available for local producers, United States radio scripts available for local stations, some of them at least would be translatable and would be used here, just as an increasing number of newspapers use material from North American publications and editors translate United States books.

OCTOBER 30th

Down at the corner near my office the street vendors have been hawking copies of a speech by the popular pro-democratic Monseñor Andrea, Bishop of Temnos, and they're going like hotcakes. His Eminence was to have delivered the speech last night at the inauguration of the Argentine Academy of Moral and Political Science. But he didn't, hence the interest. Although by no means a clarion-like, revolutionary address, De Andrea says all the bad things about non-constitutional governments, totalitarianism, etc., and all the good things about democratic freedom that he can, using somewhat the same "peg-hanging" journalistic tactics as the pro-democratic papers pointing up the wrong things governments do, rather than anything about this specific regime. Apart from De Andrea's prestige, everybody in town knows how much the *coroneles* did to prevent the speech being made at all. Monseñor de Andrea, whose popularity I have noted previously in this journal, was originally to have spoken a week ago. Immediately the title "Liberty in Face of Authority" was announced, the Casa Rosada went into a dither; came out with a solution: Ramírez himself wished to attend and therefore the date should be postponed. Actually, with student strikes and other troubles brewing, the military apparently felt a public address of this sort might set the spark to already inflamed public opinion. So the address was duly postponed. Yesterday, just before Monseñor de Andrea was to speak, it was announced the Academy had been nationalized, thus putting the organization in official hands. For some reason not yet clear, Monseñor de Andrea decided that quite obviously he couldn't very well go ahead, but he

was one up on the *militares*. All last night the presses ran and this morning the boys were selling the complete copy of the address which ended: "To dominates slaves is doubly ignoble; to reign over the free is doubly glorious! Your Excellency, *Sr. Presidente*: let your authority be the guaranty of our Liberty." The *militares*, faces crimson, can't risk trying to stop De Andrea now, so they have done the next best thing. A second version of the speech with all the hot sections cut out is also being hawked on downtown street corners. And they're selling it at half price.

OCTOBER 31st

Colonel Perón has cooked up a new job for himself. Up till now his only official title has been Under-Secretary of the War Ministry and chief behind-scenes string-puller. Now he's become head of the National Labor Department, until the present a comparatively unimportant entity which executed policies but did not make them. With all the vim of a Manhattanite refurbishing a Connecticut farm house, Perón is going to do the Labor Department over. He has told the press and his friends that labor is the most important element in Argentina today. To the press and the workers he promises improvements for the employee; to his friends, he admits that labor—on the verge of a general strike for weeks—might be the knot-yank to set this regime sliding down the greased pole. Therefore, he's going to win them over, whether they like it or not. Up to now, Perón says, the Labor Department hasn't fulfilled the purpose for which it was organized, principally through lack of power. The only solution possible, he declares, is that it be given rights similar to that of the Ministries. New Ministries cannot be created without the approval of Congress and, since there's no Congress, the Bureaus will be decreed into existence, thus getting around a lot of technicalities.

I sounded out a few labor people today, and they are really worried. Perón, they insist, is out to ingratiate himself with the working classes; yet he's already ordered many union heads jailed because they dared to point out that labor must have some say in running its

own affairs, not simply be the recipient of hand-outs which can be given or taken away at a moment's notice. Since the regime controls every possible medium of public expression, no one can dare speak out. The papers have been given to understand that their comments should confine themselves to the silver-lining aspect of the new set-up, and they salve their consciences by duly pointing out all the improvements that can be made to help labor at large.

NOVEMBER 1st

For news of Argentina's foreign policy read the Chilean papers. For weeks and weeks correspondents and local newsmen have been trying to get interviews with top official figures here, rarely getting beyond first base. Today, however, *El Mercurio*, Santiago's top daily, carries an exclusive Q. and A. session with Foreign Minister Gilbert. It is an obviously planted job, for the Argentine papers have been allowed to carry long accounts of just how great the Chilean interviewer found things here. Usually such stuff is doubly suspect, but now, either certain the trouble has blown over, or else simply determined to put up a good front, Gilbert, cockier than ever, challenges the United Nations to a debate, thus:

"When one notes that Russia hasn't declared war on Japan, when one observes that in Europe itself, Ireland, next door to England, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal are neutral; and in Asia, Turkey is likewise, one sees no reason why in America my country cannot maintain the policy of neutrality. We want to be friends with everybody and we'll break only with those powers which injure our dignity or offend our sovereignty." Argentina, he added, is sufficiently independent to manage her own affairs, "without any pressure from anybody." Asked about the present wobbly position of the regime, Gilbert snapped: "Argentina has never had a Government more solid than this one. You can tell the world that the armed forces of my nation are 99% percent with the President and the Government he incarnates." He asserted that if the war has done anything good, "it has opened our eyes to our continental possibilities in South America (Argentina's South American trade is up over 200

percent)." The post-war he went on, will give new opportunities to exploit them. "They have spoken of leaving Argentina to one side when there's an end to hostilities," he said, "but I believe that our economic situation will prove to the contrary. After all, we've been called the granary of democracy and that being the case, they can't ignore us." Whom is Gilbert trying to fool? Apparently he doesn't get around much, for this kind of statement rates simply a *cachada*, or horse-laugh.

NOVEMBER 2nd

Examinations are supposed to start in the universities today and the military, knowing student sentiment, feels they may be the kick-off for trouble. Dr. Labougle, the only Professor down at La Plata who would take the job as Rector after Palacios resigned, couldn't stand the strain any more and handed in his resignation last night. Don't doubt he's ill as claimed, but not for the reason he gives. By way of warning, long-jawed Minister of Public Instruction Zuviria today dragged out his best Red bogey, dumped all the recent trouble at the schools on the University Federation, which he said was of communistic tendency. The Federation, he claimed, attempted to "convert the universities into a political instrument at the service of exotic ideologies." Student strikes, he roared, failed, and now agitators were spreading the rumor that certain diabolical professors were waiting the moment to flunk students who refused to join the walkout. "This rumor," he said, "not only has no foundation, but it dishonors the teachers. No Argentine professor would stoop so low. In the improbable case of such a base and treacherous reprisal being taken, students may be assured there will be suitable punishment. The honor and life of the University are at stake."

He added that any student that did not present himself for examination in at least one subject, would be suspended without further question. "Propagandists of subversion," he promised, "will be eliminated. The country requires students to go to universities to stay, not to serve foreign interests and foment disturbances."

Then, in slightly more conciliatory tone, he recalled that under

"normal governments" teachers had been dismissed and schools closed, pleading: "Why do people pretend to be scandalized now, when we are living in the most tragic times in the history of humanity? We have emerged from a revolution, and the revolution has only begun."

Nobody, of course, can publicly answer Zuviria here. The short-wave radio tonight had a reply from the States. In a gesture reminiscent of the protests against Nazi book-burning ten years ago, twenty prominent educators, headed by Professor Einstein, of Princeton, President Clarence Dykstra of the University of Wisconsin, and Dr. Francis McMahon of Notre Dame, described the forced ouster of pro-democratic Argentine professors as a "dictatorial edict." "When books are burned in one country, all freedom of objective scholarship is threatened everywhere," they said. "When a man takes a stand against despotism in any country he is at the service of all humanity." Not many people, I'm afraid, especially the *militares*, heard or would pay any attention to such protests, any more than did Hitler and his gang.

NOVEMBER 3rd

Despite all their brave words, the military are apparently still worried a counter-move may come from organized labor and the university students. Arrests of those leaders voicing even mild hints about effective democracy are still going on. The last of the strongly independent unions have been intervened or closed down and Colonel Perón is using both the coaxing and threatening policy to get the "co-operation" of labor. The largest working-class groups, those in the packing house, building and transportation fields, are the potential danger spots and, I gather, they're still boiling, despite restrictions. Perón is doing the sugar-dangling job on the students as well and has followed up Zuviria's public statement with a private promise to undergraduate ears that he'll personally make sure they'll all pass their exams. "Just be good boys and stop listening to this foreign talk," is his line. Exams are going on, but the universities all over the country look more like police barracks than *facultades*.

There are cops outside, in the hallways and even in the classrooms. Any rah-rah boys who wanted to make trouble would certainly find the going tough. In some of the lecture halls, students have tried the silent treatment. They just sit, arms folded, and do nothing. Nationalist roughnecks have beaten a number courageous enough to get up and speak in favor of democracy.

NOVEMBER 4th

Plenty of attention is being paid here to the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers. *Nacion* says the organization of the future world will have its origin in the Moscow meeting "based on the great principles proclaimed by F.D.R. and Churchill. People here haven't forgotten the League of Nations," explains *Nacion*. "It failed, not because its fundamental idea was erroneous, but owing to a defect in its mechanism. The faults of the past, however, will serve as a lesson to the future." *Prensa's* comment is along the same lines, with more indirect smacks at totalitarian absolutism. To judge from the press, Argentines find their only hope ahead lies in the plans being made by the world's democratic leaders, not their own.

The flag-decked photos of Ramírez that blossomed out in such vast quantities right after the June 4th coup, seem to be fading away. In the first days no *almacén*, barber shop or *farmacia* could do without a display of the dour, leather-tough, pathetic little face of Palito. The GOU, while it keeps him in the front window as official President, apparently doesn't want to get him too much credit any more. That, in itself, is one of the strange things about Argentina's dictatorship and a startling contrast to Germany and Italy, where Der Fuehrer and Il Duce were deified as the very incarnation of the State. One thing which some of my Argentine newspaper friends have never been able to quite dope out is the real reason why the Presidential office some months ago sent out repeated warnings against buying high-priced Ramírez photos offered by street vendors and sold from door to door. The official explanation was that these energetic salesmen were trying to cash in on the President's popu-

larity and force people to pay high prices for pictures, implying dire things ahead for refusers. But the dopesters, increasingly familiar with GOU machinations, had an idea that the photograph sale was deliberately held in check lest Ramírez, finding his picture on every wall and shop window, start getting excessive ideas as to his own importance.

Only occasionally nowadays do you hear references to "*nuestro Jefe*." In the beginning, Ramírez was given all kinds of build-ups, made to tour the country and pushed into the limelight at all kinds of official functions. Now the behind-scene puppet-operators seem to be more and more interested in spotlight basking themselves. The local newsreels—Argentina has two—are particularly strong on playing up to this vanity and generally three-quarters of their footage is devoted to scenes of official openings, closings, visits, or anniversary markings. Perón, in his labor job, makes every call at any factory or institution the occasion for a full-dress parade—himself in front, a broad smile on his face and always in a uniform that for spruceness stands out in sharp contrast with his crowd of yes-men. Ramírez sometimes looks a little like Buster Keaton in his public appearances, especially when he appears in civilian clothes. At many shows I've attended he gets only scattered applause, while Churchill and F.D.R., appearing earlier on the same program in United States reels, receive a full-blast handclap. Newsreels, incidentally, aren't supposed to be applauded, and a stern warning appears when the Movietone, Paramount and other reels go on, warning against "any demonstration involving the belligerent powers."

These "simple soldiers," who in the early days kept pretty well from speech-making, are certainly enjoying the sound of their own voices. They hardly miss a chance to let out an oration which, by Argentine custom, occurs almost every time more than five people get together. In the early days, *Padre* Wilkinson, the mysterious "Gray Eminence" of the Casa Rosada, was the chief speech writer for *el Presidente*, but nowadays the Presidential Secretary, *Coronel* Gonzalez, does most of the ghosting. The Gonzalez touch is apparent, especially the veiled threats which weave in and out of the redundant, high-flown phrases. Generally you can spot Gonzalez standing somewhere just behind Ramírez when he wades through one of these addresses, spectacles low on his nose, his voice deep and grat-

ing as the pebbles on the bottom of a canary cage. By the way he tosses in commas and colons it often seems as if he'd never seen the speech before. But Gonzalez, beaming with pleasure, moves his lips as if feeding the cue to Ramírez, and occasionally nods his head in self-satisfaction, as if to say: "*Muy bien*, I certainly put that over neatly."

NOVEMBER 5th

Seven of the military-appointed Provincial Interventors, three Governors of national territories and a half dozen other officials of the Ministry of the Interior have presented their resignations to their new chief, General Perlinger. Official explanation is one of those usual polite lies: "We resign with the high and altruistic purpose of facilitating the new Minister with the necessary liberty of action to carry out his policy." Whether these men are being forced out in order to give the Perón division of the *coroneles* a chance to appoint people more to their liking, or whether the resignees are simply disgusted with the way things are going, is anybody's guess. I do hear from many sources that the situation in the interior is much more rebellious than here in Buenos Aires. Best conclusion is that the resignations are forced and that Perón and Gonzalez, who are now the top men in the colonel's Cabinet, are determined on strong-man policy and are getting out everybody they don't think they can depend upon 100 percent.

Late in September, we learn now, Perón and Gonzalez met and decided to kick out the opponents and make it clearer that they were running the show. Because of the British note which was an argument in favor of Cabinet members Anaya, Santamarina, etc., the action was delayed. Later it was charged Anaya and his group were trying to get together with the *políticos* and reintroduce the discredited, corrupt, political parties. It was also alleged that they had secretly encouraged the belligerent press campaign; that they had sabotaged decisions of the GOU and had not put into effect certain other decrees. They were mad at Anaya for having dismissed a couple of their members. It was also reliably reported that in this

meeting it was decided that if rupture must come, they must be sure the right people were in the right places for receiving the credit. But now Anaya is out and talk of breaking with the Axis has ceased.

I've been hearing an increasing lot of talk about Fritz Mandl, the European munitions tycoon, who has been quietly hiding out here since before the war. He has been acquiring all kinds of interests, the latest being a big chunk of stock in the river-boat line that runs across to Uruguay and up to Paraguay. Mandl is seen around only occasionally in some of the plushier wining and dining spots, often with Prince Von Starhemberg, who came here last June. Starhemberg has always been a rather mysterious figure in Argentina. The fact that he was Mussolini's Number-One Boy in pre-Hitler Austria has not particularly endeared him to the people here. When he arrived the papers were full of speculation, told of his leadership of the Austrian Monarchist *Heimwehr*, of his comings and goings over Europe and of his recent attempts to court the favor of the English and the Free French. When he arrived he said that he wanted to buy an *estancia* and settle down in peace. If he's up to anything here, it is certainly kept pretty well under cover. There are plenty of other mysterious *emigres* around Buenos Aires, even a Grand Duchess. One of these days I shall have to dig into the stories, but more important local events are keeping me too busy just now.

NOVEMBER 6th

All wire and radio-communications facilities, national, provincial and private, have been placed under control of the War Ministry. Grounds: It is necessary for national defense. Staffs of such companies must henceforth be composed exclusively of native-born Argentines or naturalized Argentines, with at least ten years' citizenship. Those with directive, technical or specialized posts must be native-born. The military, I understand, has covetous eyes on the Union Telefonica, largest and best telephone concern in all Latin America, and an affiliate of the I.T.&T. Its management and technical staffs are now almost exclusively Yanks and English. The cable companies, All-America, Western, Transradio (R.C.A.), Radiar are

already intervened and every phase of their operations closely watched. They can't change a circuit, modify a line route, or practically even send out a messenger boy without the official watchdog knowing what's going on.

NOVEMBER 7th

The November issue of *Clarín* spews new hints of an official anti-Semitic drive today. It calls for complete banishment of Argentina's 400,000 Jews, or at least their "confinement to ghettos." It also repeats demands that the newspapers and reviews in Yiddish, whose suspension was recently lifted by the Ramírez Government, following F.D.R.'s condemnation statement, be again taped and bound. People who have watched how many of *Clarín's* previous demands have been put into practice by the military, especially those calling for the establishment of concentration camps in Southern Ushuaia and the arrests of pro-democratic "suspects" on charges of communism, see plenty of evidence that these newest attacks may precede further anti-Jewish steps. Some of the cartoons in this November number are especially vicious. One shows a figure, obviously supposed to be President Roosevelt, ordering a flock of lame dogs to attack a *gaucho*-clad figure labeled "Ramírez." In another cartoon, F.D.R. sits wearing an orthodox Hebrew skull-cap while a repulsive figure, tagged "Jewish Press," pleads for help. Another new twist are lists of street addresses of persons who, *Clarín* says, are "Jewish members of international organizations." These cover pages whose headlines urge the Government to "take action before it's too late."

NOVEMBER 8th

More steps to quash any possible resistance. The Argentine University Federation, closed a week or so ago, is now officially dissolved. Resignations of university people who still value their standing as

men and teachers are pouring in. The Interventors of the Universities of Law and Medical Sciences, Drs. José S. Derigo and Juan Bacigaluppi, have stepped out together with a large number of deans and top professors.

From up in the Province of Mendoza comes news that all provincial and municipal employees who do not approve the neutrality policy of the Government will immediately be canned. In effect, this has been going on but never quite as openly as this uncompromising verdict. Any employee who publicly expresses opinions contrary to those of the National or Provincial authorities awaits the same fate. Moreover, it will henceforth be considered an offense for any public servant to speak any language except Spanish during office hours. The nationalists, who of course love all such moves as these, seem to be getting more and more powerful. The decrees forcing out foreign employees will naturally make new jobs available, just as anti-Semitic firings in Germany helped provide openings for Nazis.

NOVEMBER 9th

I think I'm going to get myself a little calendar showing all of the steps Hitler took on his way to insuring absolute control of Germany and check it off against what is happening here. In that way, watching point by point, it will be much easier to see how much breathing time there is left. Tonight they announce a new Sub-Secretariat of Information and Press, with wide powers to regulate the activities of the papers and foreign correspondents. *Coronel* Hector J. Ladvocat, *Chulo* (Rascal to his Army pals), is to be the Goebbels. Long one of the powerful members of the inner Cabinet, Ladvocat has been acting as unofficial censor and military spokesman since the revolution and at the same time gathering together the reins on the press, the radio, theatre and motion pictures. So far as we correspondents are concerned, Ladvocat will "collaborate to prevent the dissemination in Argentina or abroad" of all news that can be included within the very elastic definition of "prejudicial to the prestige of the Argentine nation or to the national interests." There is no mention of censorship, but correspondents are supposed to submit

all their dispatches to "collaboration," which means that those who file through Buenos Aires are pretty well limited in anything but strictly official handouts.

The new Sub-Secretariat, in the words of the decree, has as its object: "Insuring the dignity of the right of expression of free ideas and contributing to the defense and exaltation of historic tradition, culture and moral and spiritual values of the Argentine people." The joker comes right in the next paragraph: To do all this the Under-Secretariat is to "aid, centralize and co-ordinate official information and the issuance of news of general interest; provide the means by which the press, radio, social and political literature, the theatre, the cinema and public entertainments may carry out their activities in accordance with the purposes mentioned." The Department is to "stimulate the production of national films and classify them for the concession of privileges (also, you gather, to take privileges away); co-ordinate and intensify the relation of the press with the public authorities; avoid the issue of foreign publications prejudicial to national interests and insure the supply of newsprint and virgin film, intervening, if necessary, in the distribution to ascertain whether it is carried out in a satisfactory manner." And, finally, "organize State propaganda." Ladvoat doesn't seem to have overlooked anything. Where he won't be able to control the press in one way, he'll have them by the short hair in another, since all papers are dependent on imported newsprint shipped almost exclusively from the United States and Sweden. The motion-picture people must also rely on shipments from the United States, and radio stations, all Federally licensed, can be kept under thumb.

The Presidential Secretary, Colonel Enrique Gonzalez, another of the GOU strong men, will henceforth have the rank of Minister and rule directly over Ladvoat's Sub-Secretariat.

Ladvoat has already started his "collaboration" with the papers and radio stations. The latter have been ordered to avoid using the terms Nazi, fascist or Red; in war communiqués the opposition is to be referred to as the enemy. Since no news commentaries are allowed, war tidings will be pretty well confined to official communiqués. He has also given an order that broadcast news should carry less emphasis on deaths, bombing and such things. This is supposed to be distasteful. The current news is so unfavorable to

the "dirty Nazis" (Pardon me, Colonel, I meant to our honorable adversary) that the new rule may help keep the military from hearing what it doesn't want to hear.

(Later)

First step against the press—and so soon. The cops have closed the office of the local Press Wireless agency affiliate, which a number of correspondents use to transmit their dispatches to the United States. Unofficially they say the founder of the local branch was a one-time representative of the Soviet Tass Agency and that P.W. "has been handling lots of Red propaganda." This must be another one of those cases of jumping to conclusions, for P.W.'s principal job is to bring over news which comes in to its Montevideo office for newspapers and press services here.

NOVEMBER 10th

General Rawson is back in town for his daughter's marriage, but the *militares*, who like him less and less each day, are still nervous and fearful he might be out to start something. With typical Latin subtlety, therefore, they made sure that the wedding, held early this evening in the candle-lit San Francisco Basilica, had its GOU military "guard of honor," a guard so heavy that jokesters immediately spread the story that Senorita Delia Elvira was truly the bride of the regiment—a repressive regiment. Resplendent in an exquisite gown, she walked down the block-long aisle to say "I do" with *Capitan* Miguel Angel Soria. Ramírez, the Cabinet and the *coroneles* were all there, and the streets around the church were packed with as many battle reporters as social writers present, just in case the festivities turned out to have more than matrimonial implications.

I heard this remark with variations several times: "How those simple military wives have changed!" The dowdily dressed Senora de Ramírez now turns out in the most expensive, if not the most fashionable outfits and the senoras of other high-ranking officialdom strut in the latest gowns. The *militares* have repeatedly insisted that

they aren't accepting any salaries by reason of their Government posts. But, like Goering, they found ways and means. Must be that their credit standing is improving.

NOVEMBER 11th

Stories are increasing that the resignation of Ramírez is already in the hands of the *coroneles*, who are only awaiting the psychological opportunity to toss him out and substitute somebody else, possibly Farrell. Ramírez is reported to be a virtual prisoner, and each day a program is supposedly handed him to be followed to the letter. He's not even allowed to make any ghosted public speeches and cited as evidence of this is the fact that most recent addresses have been made by Farrell. Any time Ramírez talks he is pretty well controlled. For the present, they say, he is just a symbol of power: "*El Rey reina pero no gobierna.*" (The King reigns but he doesn't govern.) A campaign seems to be on to ignore his existence and many young officers openly attack or make fun of him. One joke they tell: "What's the difference between Ramírez eating a salad and a cow chewing its cud?"

"The intelligent look on the face of the cow."

The same story is also told by civilians about the *militares* in general.

The disdain for the Ramírez family is so pronounced that on the occasion of the christening of his latest granddaughter (the daughter of Captain Filippi) only three Ministers attended (Sueyro, Vago and Ameghino), although all the others had been expressly invited. The banquet was served, but there weren't enough guests to go round. Senora Ramírez, in particular, seems to have earned the dislike of the younger officers, and of the head of the Gestapo, Secretary to the Presidency, Leopoldo Lugones. He even went to the lengths of publishing a three-page article in *Cabildo's* Sunday "literary" supplement, about the "pomp and lust of human vanity." This closed with an insolently pointed reference to the wife of the highest figure in the land, who "suffered from this evil and who might perhaps take what happened to certain professors and scientists as an example,

and come off her high horse." The famous "Gray Eminences," including Father Wilkinson and Professor Beltran, a brother-in-law of Ramírez', who in the first days of the coup enjoyed considerable power, are *personas non grata* to the *coroneles*, and no longer around. Father Wilkinson seems to have been banished to Bahía Blanca, a Southern grain shipping port than which there are few duller.

NOVEMBER 12th

Another prize package from across the Andes in Santiago in the local papers this morning. Two more interviews gathered by Chilean newspaperman, Abel Valdes, one with Ramírez, the other with Perón. What each says and how the story is played here makes it obvious that Perón has a three-to-one lead over the official President. If there were any public doubts about Perón's importance previously, the interviews will certainly knock them down. Of the two stories, Perón's was not only given more attention, but it also packed much more interest. Perón, according to the interview, was questioned as to the truth of rumors in Chile (not mentioning Buenos Aires) that there was a "power behind the throne." With a wave of the hand, made even more ironic by the way he did it, Perón said this could be discounted "like the majority of other rumors circulating abroad regarding the Argentine situation." He did admit, however, that there were 3,600 officers on active service and all of these, with the exception of some 300, had sworn to give their support. "Their undated petitions asking for retirement are on file and can be enforced at a moment's notice." As to the 300, Perón said, they were "of no importance and not necessary." Regarding his new labor job, Perón stated that he himself was a syndicalist and, as such, an anti-communist, but that he believed in unions and that he would try to help them (so long, of course, as they ran exactly the way he wants). "During the few days I've been in charge of the Department," Perón boasted, "I've been able to solve difficulties dragging on for years by the simple method of appointing mixed committees." Actually, Perón has been particularly smart in playing union men against each other, has won over some leaders, and is forming Government labor bat-

talions which he controls *a la* Robert Ley. "Labor difficulties," Perón went on, "are mostly created by agitators. Many of them are not even Argentines. I am determined to bring that type of needless unrest to an end."

"The Army," Perón continued, "doesn't intend to allow any outside interference in the country's affairs, no matter of what nature." He mentioned that in the former Cabinet, "There was a Minister who represented great economic interests, many of them foreign," adding, "I personally believe that this gentleman was a very correct person, but he should have limited himself to his duties as Minister of Finance and left the conduct of foreign affairs alone." (This, of course, referred to Santamarina and confirmed the fact that everybody knew, namely that the Foreign Minister was forced out because he was in favor of breaking with the Axis.)

"Economic interests have been accustomed to dictate," Perón explained, "and took advantage of the presence of this gentleman in the Cabinet to bring pressure to bear. This was inexcusable. When North American capital, or that of any other nationality, attempts to control our foreign policy, the time arrives to say to the Minister of Finance: 'No, Sir! You are in the Ministry of Finance, but don't think that you are going to manage Argentina's foreign affairs.' He resigned, and our foreign policy will not be altered by any capital. I do not wish you to believe from this that we are anti-capitalist, because we are not, but neither will we permit capital in which we are not interested to dominate us. Argentina will not be dominated by international capitalism and interests and it is a mistake to think that Argentina's national spirit can be dominated in this manner.

"Now I would also like to state that if the moneyed interests believe that we are going to fall, they are mistaken, and we will see who will fall. We, the Argentine officers, will play out our hands and we are resolved to lose our lives if necessary for our country. We will not tolerate impositions of an international order and much less of a national order. We are much stronger than most people believe."

The Ramírez interview had only one really good point. "There is not the slightest doubt," he said, "that the great majority of the Argentine people hope for the victory of the nations that are defending the cause of democracy. But to arrive at the conclusion from this

that the majority are in favor of breaking off relations, as alleged by some badly informed persons, would be an error. The people do not wish to break off relations with anybody, for the simple reason that they love peace, and that they have no proper reason to enter into the war. Consequently the present policy will be maintained till external circumstances indicate the convenience of modifying it."

Ramírez went on to explain that "Catholic sentiment was deeply embedded in the spirit of the people and that Catholic propaganda was a propaganda of peace and of love toward all nations." Then, as if to show that he had learned his lesson from the days when he hinted that there might be a break, he stated that he endorsed Gilbert's previous statements that Argentina would go her own way. The interviews, I understand, were arranged through the Chilean Ambassador, Dr. Ríos Gallardo. They were all gathered by the 4th of this month but released in relays from Santiago, first Gilbert and then Perón and Ramírez, as though by some sort of plan.

NOVEMBER 13th

The Government last night issued a decree ordering that henceforth all *Graf Spee* sailors and officers interned in Argentina be rounded up and placed in military-operated camps. The "*Speers*," says the announcement, were given the fullest benefits of provisions of the Hague Convention, which established rules to be followed by neutral nations in interning belligerents. "However, this leniency has been taken advantage of by a number of the interned men to make their escape. The same treatment will now have to be given officers as well, for they have refused to give their word not to attempt to leave the country."

No mention is made of it, but this rates as a definite victory for columnist Walter Winchell. A few days ago, he came out in his column and over the Blue Network in the States with a hot expose of the way in which the Nazi sailors, supposedly held in custody here, had been allowed all kinds of liberties and how many had been able to make their way back to Germany to join submarines and help sink Allied ships. His original charges, of course, were not

allowed to appear, but a day or so later, all papers did carry a brief story describing how Dr. Rodolfo Garcia Arias, of the Argentine Embassy in Washington, had called on the State Department to protest. A day or so later, *La Nacion* carried a long special story from New York quoting a Professor M. E. Frampton of Columbia University who answered Winchell, citing certain steps that the Argentine Government had taken. The *Nacion* article, which mentioned the original charges only to refute them, was the first most people here had even heard about the allegation. But though they had been discussed months ago in the British House of Commons and repeatedly called to the attention of the Argentine authorities, Winchell's charges were apparently the first to really sting the military, even though they officially brushed them off. This new decree orders that the officers and men from the *Spee* shall be immediately rounded up, placed under the jurisdiction, vigilance and responsibility of the officer in command of the garrison or naval base nearest to the point fixed for their residence. The Ministers of War and Marine are each to appoint an officer to take charge of all measures to carry out the decree. However, the decree says that such members of the *Spee* who since their internment have married Argentine women, may remain at their present homes, but must report regularly to the military or naval officer in charge of the district. Even in the face of this new order, nobody thinks control will be much more severe. The most dangerous and valuable of the "*Speers*" have long since gone, and escapes these days are comparatively few. Those still left are mainly youngsters, for the crew of the *Spee* was fresh and raw when the famed 1939 battle occurred. The key men, technicians and officers who had been responsible for so many of the sinkings are no longer here. Of course, there still may be some dangerous ones left. At least the British and United States officials continue to regard them as an ever-present potential group of spies and saboteurs.

The papers are complaining that Buenos Aires is at present living in a period of scarcity and that food prices are going up. But you'd never notice it in all the restaurants. We took some friends just down from the States out to dinner at the famed Cabana last night, stuffed them with a mixed grill that included luscious sausages, all kinds of

innards, and a big chunk of steak, and then watched them almost fall off their chairs as we explained that that was merely the warming-up course, and no ration points either. A foot long, two-inch-thick baby beef that followed was marked on the menu at \$1.20. The *yanquis* thought a piece of meat like that for a dollar twenty was cheap, and when we explained that it was one peso twenty, (30 cents) the amazement was even greater. It took until two in the morning to give them the whole story—with trimmings—of why the United States won't buy Argentine meat. Like practically all other Americans who come down here, we're certain they will go back to spread the word.

NOVEMBER 14th

I have been checking over some of the recent appointments made by the military, trying to get some idea of what trends they indicate. Scholastic appointments, in particular, show one type: Ultra-clerical, bigoted Catholics, who represent the most reactionary group within the Church. This regime holds to the theory that its religious tendencies definitely prove it's not Nazi. "The Nazis," it says, "are pagans—we want the Church over everybody." Everybody—they might add—whether everybody likes it or not. This meets with the approval of many conservative Argentines, both the wealthy, who feel that giving the poor plenty of religion will keep them from thinking too much about other things, and the very poor, who have always been held in close check by the Church. But many middle-class and labor people, particularly those of more liberal stamp, point out that the De Andreas and the more liberal elements in the Roman Catholic Church are being pushed aside, while the ultra reactionaries find official blessing.

Tomas de Casares, whose thinking resembles that of Father Coughlin, and who has always been close to the Falange, has been named Interventor of the University of Buenos Aires. Hector A. Llambias, a notorious Falangist and formerly Secretary of Culture and Morality of the municipality of Buenos Aires, is the new Interventor of the Facultad de Economía del Litoral. Horacio P. Oneto,

formerly Secretary of Public Health in Buenos Aires, who has been given a high municipal post, has long edited and privately circulated a pro-Axis review in the Municipal Public Works Department. Romulo Echevery Boneo is named Interventor of the Universidad del Litoral. Isidoro Garcia Santillan, a nationalist and a particularly bitter writer for the pro-Axis weekly *Choque*, is the new Secretary General of the same University, and Romulo Amadeo, a writer for Franco's *Sol y Luna*, will head the economics school there.

NOVEMBER 15th

The Nazi-aided nationalists seem to be carefully spreading undercover threats that an anti-Semitic pogrom is planned against Buenos Aires' Jews. Some preventive steps have already been taken by the community and the Government, but the reports persist nevertheless that Jew-baiting demonstrations will occur on the 23rd, when Buenos Aires holds its first complete city-wide anti-air-raid black-out. A few days ago a group representing the "Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations" called on various officials, who said they were already aware of reports that nationalist strong-armers were planning a "severe and bloody clean-up." But, they added, no such demonstrations would be allowed. "It is not the fact that we are worried about the Jews," they said, "but since President Roosevelt protested to the world when we closed a couple of little Jewish newspapers, can you imagine what would happen if a Jew were killed?"

Possibly half of Buenos Aires' 300,000 middle-class and poorer Jews, especially those of Russian and Polish descent, live in an area not unlike Manhattan's lower East Side, centering around Calles Corrientes and Junin. This is the district where trouble might develop, and the youth of the community are already prepared "just in case." Special guards are regularly posted at the Hospital Israelita and around the Libertad and other synagogues, the *Diario Israelita* and *Di Presse*, the biggest Jewish newspaper, plus other centers. Some incidents have already occurred. There have been attacks and beatings of Jewish students at the universities. The pro-fascist pro-

neutrality groups, especially the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista, have renewed their anti-Semitic campaign following the appointments of Dr. Martinez Zuviria to the Ministry of Justice.

What a contrast to the semi-official tone of some of Argentina's anti-Semitic steps is the action taken over in Montevideo by the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies this past week. They asked the Ministry of Public Instruction there to investigate charges that half a dozen German-Jewish refugee children were expelled from a British school simply because of their religion. A prominent Britisher who runs a lot of big business in Montevideo has been accused of being responsible and strong steps have been taken to force him from his school-board post. Expelling Jewish children from any school here would hardly merit a reply of protest, let alone an official investigation by Congress. Argentina does not even have a Congress to do any probing.

NOVEMBER 16th

Much interest here in reports from Washington on new post-war plans for Latin America. Airline applications for new rights have started people talking of the possibilities of flying from Buenos Aires to New York in two days. But to the Argentine military, it just brings shudders. They fear *yanqui* imperialism will follow *yanqui* airlines, although Pan-American Airways has done a marvelous job in developing Latin-American lines, squeezing out the Nazis and selling the Latin public on the fact that it is a transportation company, not an empire builder.

Also much interest in reports from the United Nations Aid and Rehabilitation Congress in Atlantic City, particularly talk about colonizing Latin America with millions of war refugees. Requests are to be made to the Governments of Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, Venezuela, Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador to open their frontiers. Paraguayan representative Dr. Paris Menendez, has offered a big tract on the Alto Parana which, he says, would be enough to care for as many as 3,000,000 people. Brazil's delegate also manifests "in principle" the idea of favorable treatment for Hitler's

victims. Still, I fear that some of the speeches are talk and nothing more. Brazil has certainly shown no favorable attitude toward refugees, Jewish and non-Jewish, and Bolivia, while claiming she has admitted 40,000 Jews and political immigrants since the present war, is already lashed with nationalist-inspired anti-Semitism.

NOVEMBER 17th

Coronel Emilio Ramírez, chief of Buenos Aires' police force and member of the inner council of the GOU, is proposing a Federal Police Force scheme which will give the military an even closer control of the entire country than heretofore. The plan is not for any F.B.I.-patterned set-up but rather more on the German system. Once again the military is taking advantage of the admitted inefficiency of previous official organizations to drive through new measures far stronger and more ruthless than anyone believed possible. *Coronel* Ramírez had a good deal of opposition from Leopoldo Lugones, who last month was appointed to the Presidential Secretariat. Lugones has already set up his own Gestapo and, in fact, even set his watchdogs to control *Coronel* Perón. The wide-awake *coronel* soon spied the cop—one of Ramírez' favorite bodyguards—beat up the flatfoot and, later, Lugones himself. The latter had to go to a hospital and subsequently resigned. Lugones had worked out a scheme of dividing Buenos Aires into sections for house-to-house police espionage under sectional squads similar to the German Terror Gangs. *Coronel* Ramírez' plan does not openly include any such squads, but his Federal Police brainchild, which will probably be approved shortly, does devote plenty of effort to political espionage.

It is officially announced that investigations of communist activities have resulted in the arrests of one Alfonso Posse, a twenty-three-year-old Republican Spaniard who was in charge of the distribution of an underground newspaper known as *Unidad Nacional*. The police nabbed 15,000 copies destined for interior provinces, took over a print shop owned by Julio A. Bardoni and reportedly got quite a list of names. Another Spaniard, Manuel Rodríguez, had printed

50,000 leaflets for distribution to meat workers. All will undoubtedly be sent south for solitary confinement.

NOVEMBER 18th

Development of the Latin-American bloc, with Argentina as the leader—one of the basic plans of the GOU—is getting under way. A new trade treaty between Argentina and Paraguay was signed this morning by Foreign Minister Gilbert and Dr. Espinoza, Paraguayan Minister of Finance and head of his country's trade mission here. Little, land-locked Paraguay has always been kept under Argentina's careful eye. But lately United States Lend-Lease aid has drawn President Higinio Moríñigo and Paraguayan officialdom closer to the States. This new treaty should help overcome that. General Gilbert hailed the new pact as proof of Argentina's policy of co-operation "without prejudices, calculations or tendencies." He recalled that this was only one of a series of treaties that Argentina had made with other Latin-American nations—in '41 with Brazil, in August of this year with Chile, later, one with Bolivia and Peru. Signing this new pact with Paraguay should help both regimes. Paraguay's military dictatorship has long been severe. Individual rights and personal liberties are at a minimum there. The right of habeas corpus, more or less forgotten here, has disappeared in Paraguay. Arrests on suspicion have been even more frequent in Asuncion than in Buenos Aires. The Ingavi concentration camp in the Chaco has plenty of alleged communists, yet profascists are free to do almost as they please, unmolested by Moríñigo's special Brazilian-trained police corps. There are some 35,000 Germans, mostly pro-Nazi, in Paraguay. Paraguay's Army uses up more than 78 percent of her \$4,500,000-dollar annual budget. Decrees pour out from Asuncion as fast as they do in Buenos Aires.

Leaders of the Union Civica Radical Party had a long interview with the Police Chief Colonel Ramírez, yesterday. Said they were pleased with things, brought in their shiny apples of approval for the revolutionary movement and agreement with problems to be

solved, then asked for a favor. "Could we," they pleaded, "get started again? We would like to hold our party convention." Hemming and hawing, the colonel said the request would have to be submitted to the Ministry of the Interior. A polite brush-off, which means that the GOU is probably cooking up some plans of its own regarding the political parties, which it now has under strict control. Even if the *permiso* is granted, thirty days' notice will have to be given before the session can be held, so there is no convention likely to take place until the first fortnight of January, 1944.

NOVEMBER 19th

Argentines lining up in potato and sugar queues here in this land of plenty, is such a rare spectacle that the papers a few days ago broke out in a rash of pictures, until it was suggested that such photos might "cause discontent" and that the dailies should confine themselves to carrying official statements about how soon the situation would be cleared up. Actually, it is a case of muddled distribution rather than shortages. Growers up in Concepcion and Alto Verde, in the Province of Tucumán, are in danger of losing a 60,000-bag crop due to lack of transportation. Yet the shortages in Buenos Aires and larger cities are such that even those waiting in line for hours frequently have to be turned away empty-handed. The growers are asking the Ministry of Agriculture to arrange for the necessary transportation, pointing out that they were urged to take up their crop early, while no arrangements were made to have it transported to the cities. This case, more than many another more important incident which may not be so easily observed, has caused many people to wonder how long the military, few of whom have had any training in Government administration, will be able to keep on without getting themselves hopelessly snarled. A colonel, they tell you, can be an excellent soldier without knowing how to run an extensive Government department. If they were good administrators, and had co-operative technical help, the problem would not be so bad. But hundreds of the most capable Federal Administration people have been pushed out or walked out and the *militares*, whose

mentality runs along strictly hard-and-fast lines, keep pounding away with seemingly little realization that not all the give-and-take of running a government is political chicanery. They feel that once a rule is made and a decree issued, the problem is solved.

Time Magazine, whose air-express edition is probably the most highly prized news source for thousands of English-speaking people in Latin America, was officially banned from the mails yesterday. The Post Office gave out a list of some 130 papers, which cannot be circulated or carried through the mails. Most of them are locally printed, twenty or so from the States and the rest from Uruguay, Chile and other Latin-American countries. *Time* has been in hot water with the authorities here for a long period, and recent issues—those few numbers which get through to subscribers—generally have any article about Argentina scissored out. The reason *Time* is officially tagged is that its air-express edition is printed locally, much like V-mail from photographic plates air-expressed down from the States and is the fastest, large-circulation United States publication to get around here. Thus it attracts more attention than the more reserved magazines and papers which arrive two to three months late by boat.

NOVEMBER 20th

Dr. Felipe Espil, Argentina's popular Ambassador in the United States, came back to Buenos Aires today, recalled for replacement by Franco's favorite, Adrian Escobar. Espil has been Ambassador to the United States for so long that the military feel he has grown out of touch with his own country. His senora, heiress to a vast United States packing fortune, has only made flying visits here in the past. What will happen to Espil, nobody knows. He certainly got no great reception from the Foreign Ministry; only minor officials were there to greet him.

Perón's "I-am-the-guy-who-does-it" interview published in the Chilean press and reprinted here last week, has caused a GOU rumpus which has been public property. Perón has claimed foul and done some follow-up explaining, which today brings a letter of thanks from Ramírez. But his apology is regarded as not having withdrawn a single word of what was originally written. Apparently, Perón did not mind its being published, but the other GOU men felt it made Perón out a little too important and Ramírez too much of a stooge, hence this public "kiss-and-make-up."

Perón denied he had written out the interview, or revised it, added that "like his brother officers he was a soldier without personal ambition," and went on to say: "We cannot admit that we should be accused of exercising hidden functions beyond the sphere laid down for us by our chief, General Ramírez, by whom we are guided and directed and to whom we are bound by a most solemn oath—one that has never been broken. It is he who commands and we obey. That is our assignment and duty which we will never yield to anything. When reference is made to the unity of officers and chiefs, it is to be understood this is to our superiors." Perón also backed down on the quoted remarks about Finance Minister Santamarina, again asserted he had no personal ambitions and bluffed: "I always considered them despicable."

In his note, Ramírez said Perón's "honorable reaction is the best proof of his highly patriotic sentiments," added that, "Paid elements in the country sought to provoke confusion and disorder, which the men at arms had the enormous responsibility to check." And, as one of the boys put it: "Perón doesn't say he didn't mean it, he says he didn't mean it to be published."

A new drive, subtle but effective, to convince even pro-democratic Argentines of the justification of their country's fence-sitting policy, is now under way. The theme: "Buenos Aires' neutrality is really helping the Americas by allowing Argentina to supply the United Nations with meat, wheat and other products." The new Goebbels-style official Press and Propaganda Secretariat being pushed forward by Colonel Ladvocat, has launched the drive, which is using the

press, radio and films. This hemisphere-harmony idea is something of a reversal of the old stand that Argentina had to stay aloof from taking sides and remain friendly to everybody. That argument never went well with at least 80 percent of the people.

This new angle, I think, was best revealed in a special short film which all theatres have been ordered to play, and which appeared on local screens over the weekend. It is called *Argentina and America*, has been produced by Antonio Angel Diaz and his *Sucesos Argentinos* film outfit, which used to be Castillo's best pal. Beef, corn, hides, cheese, eggs, etc., are pictured being loaded on vessels of the State Merchant Fleet and carried from the Rio de la Plata to other parts of the hemisphere. "Neutral Argentine boats," the announcer explains, "sail the South Atlantic and the Pacific, speedily and safely, carrying goods to our beloved sister nations. This proves Argentine neutrality is helping democracy." A flag-flying close brings applause. It's a slick, clever, persuasive job, especially for those *Argentinos* who have previously disagreed with their Government's policy. Amplified and repeated, it is going to convince even more.

One indication of what type of radio propaganda is being used to sell the same idea is a new little program called "The Traveling Microphone" which Radio Splendid, the NBC outlet in Buenos Aires, was ordered to carry this week. The broadcasts are written by the Press Bureau, stamped with the official seal and then given the station for broadcast. No mention can be made, however, that it's an official handout. Two imaginary characters, Juan and Pedro (nobody knows how they picked these names, for Pedro might be Ramírez and Juan, Perón), have a long discussion on why Argentina remains neutral. Juan is the straight man, feeds the questions, while Pedro answers, stressing the point that neutrality is actually helping the other United Nations and providing them with food-stuffs and other materials otherwise unobtainable. The strongest part of the program, however, is a bitter attack on Argentine newspapers, which sounds like the daily ravings of *Pampero*. When Juan asks: "Can't I believe what I read in the papers?" the answer comes: "No! They simply take the orders of their advertisers. They just select what news their advertisers want them to print."

Since practically all but the outright Nazi papers depend for their foreign news on the American news services, the inference is plain

that the military hopes to prove readers should switch to the Nazi-fascist press, which carries practically no advertising except a few handouts from German firms. Radio Belgrano has been "advised" to carry a nightly fifteen-minute program called the "Forum of Public Opinion," which sells the same kind of propaganda. All stations also must stop whatever they are doing at any time to carry special official "news flashes," generally of little or no news value. They are not even allowed to re-write these or try to present them in more interesting style.

NOVEMBER 22nd

Another official interview in Santiago's *El Mercurio*, this time with War Minister Farrell. Coming so soon after the Perón row, it must have been proofread by everybody in the Casa Rosada. His main points are these: The Government is strong, it is growing stronger.

There is "no possibility of the present situation being changed by the armed forces (meaning a counter-move), because it is precisely these same forces which are guaranteeing order and stability. Anything to the contrary is mere rumor."

"I myself have been the victim of these rumors, they have even attacked my private life. It has been said that I intend to overthrow General Ramírez. What could be a greater absurdity? I am united to him by a friendship of more than twenty years' standing, and I am the first to recognize his calm, equanimous and just character."

"It has been said that I have struck my colleagues during a Cabinet meeting, following a difference of opinion, but, *mi buen amigo*, I assure you that I have never struck anybody in my life, not even my children."

"I know that it has been stated abroad that there is street fighting in Buenos Aires, many wounded and killed. I have seen none of these things; anybody walking the streets can see there is absolute tranquillity, life is proceeding under normal conditions that might be expected under a revolutionary and military government."

The interviewer, drawing attention to the fact that he thought there was considerable unrest among those opposed to the Govern-

ment, was told: "That does not count, they are the opinions of people with no sense of realities and who perhaps desire a political change. This will not occur. Contrary to what is said by professional politicians, the President is daily growing more popular. The welcomes he has received during his recent tours have proven this." Asked about restoring elections, Farrell said: "The President made a statement about this in his first public address. This Government is not definitive—nothing is definitive in this life. The necessary measures will be taken to return the situation to normal when circumstances indicate it is right and fitting. In the meantime, we have a huge job to do and this is being carried out."

This being a more or less official interview, it was carried in all papers. No comment, however.

NOVEMBER 24th

Buenos Aires had its first citywide blackout last night. For days the military have been promoting the demonstration, but the big question has been—against whom is Argentina going to hide? Posters had been stuck up all over the town showing how windows would have to be draped, car-bumpers painted, lights covered, etc., but *porteños*, with their characteristic irreverence, kept saying: "What's the use? We have so few anti-aircraft batteries that any strong enemy could fly over right in broad daylight and we wouldn't be able to do a thing." This morning's papers quote the military as boasting the trial a terrific success.

NOVEMBER 25th

Political prisoners of the regime have been secretly arrested, held incommunicado and tortured with electricity, according to the underground newspapers. I've just gotten hold of one such paper *Noticario de la Libertad*, a mimeographed bulletin circulated from hand to hand, like those in Hitler-occupied Europe. "Gestapo systems," it

says, "have been used increasingly by the political police since June 4th. These cases are cited:

"On November 8th, police raided the headquarters of the Oficina Rio Platense de Prensa, local affiliate of the United States Press Wireless service. The 'Citizen' Adolfo Roigt was arrested. Later, in a print shop, 'Citizens' Miguel Carlos Lombardi and Eduardo Marull were seized. Roigt, still held in Villa Devoto jail on bread and water, has been brutally beaten and tortured with a *picaña*, or electric pointer used in driving animals."

"On November 13th, 'Citizen' Alfonso Posse was arrested and tortured with electricity by *Comisario* Magnani and an employee named Gonzalez."

"A law student, Miguel Carlos Lombardi, was seized for editing an underground publication. He was taken to Avellaneda on November 12th, beaten by the 'torturer' Gonzalez and tortured with electricity. His face and body are now marked."

"The political police are keeping this and other cases incommunicado," the paper says. "The Argentine people, its representative men, its political parties and the press must know the facts." The paper adds that "tortures inflicted on political prisoners in the Northern territory of the Chaco have already been investigated and repudiated by the Military Interventor there, Colonel Miguel Angel Montez. President Ramírez, Colonel Emilio Ramírez, the chief of police, and other Government officials, are called upon to punish 'those responsible for these barbaric tortures.'"

The charges, of course, cannot be checked, but the police a fortnight ago did officially announce that the special section had arrested Marull and found a large quantity of propaganda material of the Liga Argentina por los Derechos del Hombre (Argentine League for the Rights of Man) in his home, together with printing materials, card indexes, etc., which, they said, were being used as the general archives of the organization.

The raid on the Oficina Rio Platense located in the vast, sprawling Galeria Guemes, was also admitted, but of course nothing of the alleged tortures.

More measures to control any opposition. The police, it is announced, have for some days past taken special measures for

vigilance and investigation "after having discovered that, in the early hours of the morning, various undesirable and unscrupulous persons have been writing injurious slogans against the authorities, or which are injurious to international good relations." "At the same time," it adds, "communist propaganda leaflets are distributed in an attempt to confuse public opinion and injure the authorities. Several people have been arrested and, after trial, have been sent to the territories of the South." That is as far as the official admission goes, but the several actually runs into hundreds and the trials are really nothing more than superficial hearings.

NOVEMBER 26th

With Argentine newspapers—once among the world's best—now strictly limited in what they can say, a powerful ungagged underground press is now developing in Buenos Aires and the interior. As in Hitler-occupied Europe, Argentina's clandestine papers are being secretly printed in hidden basements, others on mimeographs or duplicators. You spot them under work benches in factories and offices. Copies are often pushed under front doors at night. During this week's blackout trial many were scattered on streets, especially in the working-class district. Arrests of editors of some of these papers and seizures of the print shops of others have not stopped them. They range from tabloid-sized, professional-looking publications to one-sheeters. Their tone ranges from mild to violent. Many charge the military "dictatorship" with being pro-Nazi; others call for overthrow of the regime, employ subtle Latin sarcasm, ask embarrassing questions and cite history.

The *Noticiario de la Libertad*, for example, started as a six-page tabloid and, when the police nabbed its plant, somebody else took over and it now appears in mimeographed form. *Unidad Nacional*, which devoted its space to calling for a united front of Argentina's pro-democratic, socialist, radical and other liberal parties, was also nabbed but has since reappeared. Both these undercover papers are charged by the authorities with being communist, an allegation which has been hurled so much by now that nobody takes it seri-

ously. While some of the papers are, as charged, undoubtedly communist, or communist-inspired, the increasing number and variety make it obvious that plenty of others, especially liberal student elements, are using the underground press as a weapon. Well-thumbed copies are constantly being smuggled out to Montevideo and Santiago and provide an important source of news regarding happenings inside tightly-censored Argentina.

NOVEMBER 27th

Senator Hugh Butler, the Nebraska Republican, has tossed a nice fat stink bomb into the Good Neighbor House a-building these last few years. All the papers here yesterday carried long dispatches from Washington quoting Butler's charges that *Tio Sam* was tossing out millions and millions for "candystick diplomacy." "Our present policy," Butler wailed, "is based on sentimental dreams, which are merely reflections of our own ideas, not theirs, and is tolerated by Latin Americans solely because it is accompanied by liberal donations from our Treasury." Butler called for a re-examination of United States policies "to forestall the inevitable collapse in our Latin-American relations when our financial liberality comes to an end." He followed with alleged details about how much our policy was costing us throughout Latin America—500 dollars a pound for rubber from Brazil, for which we used to pay six cents; sub-chasers presented to the Cuban Government for use by badly trained crews, millions in credits for all kinds of plants and projects.

The figures certainly sound fantastic and, while I naturally don't know the answers to all of the points, it's obvious Butler is out to throw as much mud as he can at the Roosevelt Administration. I talked to him when he was here with his entourage, which included a group of high-powered secretaries who did a lot of questioning and, it seemed to me, not overmuch listening. They did not spend much time here, possibly because United States aid to Argentina has been practically at a minimum. Over drinks at the Hotel Plaza one night, the correspondents did chin with the Senator while he expounded at length on the fact that he was making this trip on his

own to better his knowledge of Latin America. He kept insisting that he was paying his bills and was doing the trip as a personal venture, although he planned to turn over copies of his reports to the Truman and Byrd Committees in Washington.

The Nazis have been having a great time with his charges. *Pampero*, *Cabildo* and the other sheets have been lauding "this *yanqui* who at last speaks the truth," but the pro-democratic papers have been featuring the answers by Vice-President Wallace, Nelson Rockefeller and the United States press, which seems to have jumped on Butler with both feet. Latin America, which follows United States politics with far more interest and attention to detail than the United States follows Latin affairs, generally believes Butler to be "playing politics." The F.D.R. policy has really made a good start on the job of winning Latin friends and influencing people. Butler's stir will certainly give the hate forces within the Latin Governments a chance to sound off, however. Nelson Rockefeller's statement giving some of the real facts on aid to Latin America is getting headlines here. Even though some of Butler's allegations have been pipe dreams, clearing up some misconceptions about United States policy may be a good thing.

NOVEMBER 28th

Learned for the first time today that there's bullfighting in Argentina. This because of an article in *Prensa* demanding that local authorities be stopped from permitting such fights. While bullfighting is not expressly prohibited by law, it's a punishable offense which appears to be a distinction with precious little difference. Fights are extremely rare, however, and apparently occur only in a few far-distant Northern cities whenever the promoters can get a *torero*. Argentina considers herself above such barbaric practices; much prefers *futbol* and the races. But for real Argentine sport, polo is the thing. Yesterday the polo championship was run and it's a spectacle that no Westchester polo field can match.

In my cub-reporter days I used to think there was no profession more trying on the feet than that of the newspaperman. Since I've

become a husband, I've begun to discover that that is a profession which works the dogs very hard too. A newspaperman-husband gets it double. In the last couple of weeks my senora has dressed me up (not in striped trousers and gray topper, because there are limits to what even a docile Yank husband will endure) in my very best dark *casimir*, gray silk necktie and buttonhole carnation, so that I could escort her to the *carreras* at Palermo and San Isidro and to the Polo. In fact, I became what Anglo-Argentines call a *Polo-Che*. (Derived from the Irish-Argentine manner of speaking, thus: "Hello, *che*, you come for the polo-*che*?"") At the *Gran Premio* we strutted, or rather trudged on the pebble-lined paths for hours on end, surrounded by the cream of the aristocracy in the very smartest of get-ups. My elbow was submitted to those constant pinches that are a reminder to the well-trained spouse: "That's just what I would like, dea-a-r!" The ladies were beautiful, I admit, and so were the horses, and the whole scene colorful and gay, but my concern in horses begins and ends with the lovely shimmer of their satiny coats, and a whistle of amazement at the price they may fetch at the Tattersall.

I was interested, however, in seeing what sort of a reception this aristocratic, former ruling class, gave to General Ramírez or those members of his Cabinet who appeared on the *Pelouse*. The President drove round the course in the customary four-in-hand, to be received by the top man of the Jockey Club at the wicket and escorted up the steps of the grandstand to the Presidential gallery. In former years, this ascent has been the signal for a great storm of clapping. As the coach and out-riders drove along the course, past the crowded *populares*, there did seem to be a good burst of applause, but, as these were hundreds of plain-clothes men posted there, it was generally admitted that they probably served as a *claque*. I saw a good number of ladies deliberately fill their hands with bags, gloves, opera or field glasses as Ramírez mounted to his box, so as to leave them no free hands with which to clap. A battery of glasses were trained on Senora Lobato Mulle de Ramírez, because, as Don M. explained to us, "I just wanted to see how the upstart gloated in her *Palitto's* glory." No, definitely, this was no reception to a hero!

For the past few months I have been gathering details of Latin Nazi business activity, not only here but throughout the continent. Bit by bit they add up to an amazing jigsaw that seems hard to believe until you remember what happened after the last war. The Nazis have drawn up elaborate, full-scale plans to gain control of the majority of Latin-American markets after the war, regardless of the defeat of Hitler. These plans, I have just learned from top sources, are already under way, not only here—where Berlin can still operate openly—but in many other Latin-American Republics which have long since severed diplomatic relations with the Axis and have even declared war. Germany's vast industrial combines, which started Der Fuehrer on his way to power, are pulling the strings. As was partially the case after the last war, they hope to use the Southern countries of this hemisphere as a basis and developing ground for their post-war *ausland* trade, and as a springboard for building up their resources for the "next try" at world domination. And, also as previously, these powerful firms employ the old system of international cartels and barter deals, hoping to operate against the United Nations' plans for a pro-democratic Pan-American co-operation, by developing destructive nationalist rivalries among the Latin-American nations and aligning country against country and Latin America against Uncle Sam.

The failure of certain Latin-American countries to take adequate steps to squeeze out the Nazis, the holes in our frequently wishy-washy economic warfare policy and Argentina's open Axis door, have given Germans in many parts of Latin America the power to continue active operation, or to hibernate for the duration. German influence and propaganda, which continue strong but indirect throughout Latin America, plus a lack of real knowledge of the meaning of the Nazi menace to *them*, have given the Germans a chance to retain a foothold and develop plans against Argentines, Bolivians, Chilcans, Peruvians and other Latin Americans. Even now, the experts tell me, German agents are promising rich post-war markets for Latin America's raw materials and talking of the future abundance of good, cheap, German manufactured goods made under low living standards. Conservatives and business men

are being worked on with talk that F.D.R.'s Good Neighbor policy is for the duration only—talk aided by such characters as Senator Butler. These leaders and reactionaries are being told that regardless of the war's outcome a "bulwark against Russian communism" will still be needed. This type of propaganda, I have found, is not directed at Senor and Senora Juan Q. Pueblo but at the higher-ups, some of whom have given good lip service to democracy but who still put business first.

Using Buenos Aires as a general headquarters, the Nazis have already set up hundreds and hundreds of cover-up firms, straw fronts and stooge organizations to escape the United States and British blacklists which now, at last, are identical. Many of these have been spotted and listed—the Latin-American blacklist has now close to 15,000 names. The persistence with which Germany's drug, chemical, electrical and other businesses have continued operating, despite the terrific costs, is one of the best indications of their post-war value to the Berlin industrialists. The big danger is that while blacklisted firms are cutting off their dealings with the United Nations, they continue operations in many Latin-American countries, carrying on not only trade, but propaganda, espionage and fifth columnism. These firms, and those who have continued to escape from the blacklist, are the key to the whole question of squeezing the totalitarians out of our hemisphere and of exposing their post-war schemes, those who have probed the situation say.

The gravity of the issue is best understood if the countries are analyzed one by one.

Argentina is still wide open to Axis business. Hundreds of German, Japanese and Italian companies are going full blast with apparently little fear that even if relations are broken they will be affected. Huge pre-war stocks and locally manufactured products enable them to keep up their continent-wide activities. Profits are frequently used for anti-democratic activities.

Brazil, slow to start, is now getting stronger in fighting Axis business. German banks have now been taken over, many Nazi business houses seized and sold to Brazilian operators, or operated by Inter-ventors. There are still plenty of holes, but progress is good.

Chile, although it severed relations, still allows the Banco Aleman Transatlantico and the Banco Germanico, big Berlin institutions, to

remain open. AEG, the electrical trust, Quimica Bayer in Santiago, and other German interests operate with weakest of controls. Open Nazi propaganda has been halted, but the situation is one of the worst.

Uruguay is willing but careless, the experts say. Some of the Axis banks are still operating together with big importing houses like Kurt Berger, six blacklisted radio stations, Merck chemicals.

Bolivia has been one of the chief Nazi centers. Strong steps are only now being taken, but the listed Hotel Central in La Paz continues to be totalitarian headquarters, all kinds of Nazi enterprises continue and Nazi-fostered nationalist movements flourish under cover.

Paraguay, although getting lots of United States Lend-Lease, allows German banks, businesses and the IPA, leading industrial outfit, to run as they please. The blacklisted Gran Hotel in Asuncion is a favored Army gathering place and checks are often on the house.

Parts of Central America are pretty well controlled, especially Panama. Colombia and Venezuela are extremely loose, the latter still has lots of German operatives and a big blacklist.

These Nazi plans are being watched by Washington and London, but those familiar with the question here urge: Development of a general plan by all co-operative Latin-American Republics; a campaign to show Latin Americans the German post-war menace; assistance to those countries willing to take over German firms along lines already put in operation with the aid of the Export-Import Bank. And finally, extension of the blacklist and blocking up the holes in our own economic-warefare policy.

NOVEMBER 30th

A still stronger economic-warfare policy by Washington and London is needed, if Axis firms planning ways and means of gaining control of major Latin-American markets after the war are to be routed out and blocked. So say the experts, increasingly worried about what the Nazis are still doing in Latin America. Defeating the after-Hitler plans of the German industrialists who seek to hold

on in Latin America after the defeat of Nazi No. 1 is one of the toughest and least-known fronts in the United Nations world-wide economic battle. But because it is a battle, it needs battlefield approach, battlefield tactics and battlefield punch. Since 1939 both our own and the British Embassies and war agencies have been steadily augmenting their efforts from Washington southward, searching out, locating and halting the activities of these enemy agents. We are up against a difficult customer, for the Axis has been here a long time and is still in very deep after four years of war. Thousands and thousands of Nazi firms are still operating in Latin America, some tied to Berlin but many working locally. The profits have been used to fight United Nations democracy and for salting away "for later." One of the greatest difficulties in battling the Axis in Latin America has been to locate the fronts, the dummies and the stooge organizations set up with the aid of many top-rank Latin Americans who believed that business, even business with Hitler & Co., came first. In many ways it is like jungle fighting.

A favorite Nazi stunt has been to set up straw companies, stuffing the boards with people of importance who did little work but got terrific pay for lending their names, prestige and drag in the right places. Fearing "complications" because of the official connections involved, some appeasers within our own State Department helped keep many of these from being blacklisted. Immunity granted such big shots, many already totalitarian-minded, had another important effect: It gave them a real interest in seeing Hitler win, or at least in having German and Japanese industrial combines continue operating here, now and after the war. Resultingly, many became interested in Berlin-approved, anti-democratic nationalist organizations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and other countries, augmenting the Nazi use of their companies to cloak fifth columning espionage and sabotage. Our punch-pulling, plus Argentina's open Axis door and the failure of certain countries to take adequate steps to squeeze out the Nazis has led them to continue operations in many Good Neighbor Republics, often with United States goods and materials.

The "Brain Trust" of the German plan to retain a foothold in Latin America is a secret high council headquarters in Buenos Aires.

The Germany Embassy, which occupies a massive, luxurious skyscraper building in the heart of the financial district, is represented on the council and Japanese, Spanish Falangists and Italian fascists sit in at various times. I've talked to investigators who have gone into these operations and they say that these days not all the members are 100 percent Nazis. The important people now are the representatives of the vast German industrial combines, the groups which helped put Hitler into power, who developed the cartel system to such an amazing extent in Latin America, and the outfits which hope to continue operating here even after the swastika is hauled down over the Wilhelmstrasse.

All the members of the Council are not known, but the important ones in Buenos Aires include: Ricardo Staudt, a blacklisted construction tycoon; Alfredo Herrmann, top man of the vast Siemens-Schuckert electrical trust; Heinrich Homann, boss of Bayer and other German drug interests in Latin America; Ernesto Niebuhr and Fernando Ellerhorst, financial and accounting experts for many leading Latin-American Nazi firms.

Most important of the German agencies still operating throughout Latin America are the banking, drug, electrical, building and financial combines. Here is a typical case I've been able to study: Siemens-Schuckert, an affiliate of I.G. Farben. Herr Herrmann, a smooth, polished industrialist whose knowledge of Latin America goes back many years, is director; Marin Arnoldo Stoop, general manager. They have three major companies in Buenos Aires. Siemens, Siemens y Halske and Siemens Bauunion, all headquartered in a sprawling, gray-fronted building at Avenida de Mayo, 869. From Buenos Aires' ornamental subways to its new War Department building, they have engaged in thousands of projects. They maintain branch offices in strategic points throughout Argentina; carry on manufacture, distribution, retailing. Their Brazilian branch, Companhia Brasileira de Electricidade on Rua General Camara, Rio, is now being taken over by the Vargas Government, but the Siemens Ltda. is still wide open in Valparaiso and elsewhere in Chile. Its offices in the Palacio Salvo, in Montevideo, run full blast, and other countries still permit them to operate under their own name and in their own way. The list of their subsidiary firms, including A.E.G. in Buenos Aires, in Bogota, Colombia, in Guatemala

and in Santiago would fill a column. Their tie-ins with German building firms like Thyssen Lametal, of Belgrano 752, Buenos Aires, Wayss & Freytag, of Leandro Alem 168, Buenos Aires, and G.E.O.P.E., are even longer. These are only the ones that are blacklisted. Each month Uncle Sam discovers others. But so far, amazing as it seems; comparatively few Latin-American countries have nationalized and taken over Nazi firms operating within their borders and thus the Nazis continue merrily along.

Another outstanding case is that of Bayer, headquartered at Cer viño 3101, Buenos Aires. Their Lima, Peru branch at Avenida Brazil 198, their Montevideo establishment at Venezuela 1211, and their Rio set-up, are still serving jointly to promote the Reich trade and prepare for post-war. Bayer, Mexico, has been taken over and is now deleted from the blacklist, but the other companies continue strong. Merck, operating in Buenos Aires, Rio, Santiago and Bogota, among other places, is another link in the vast German chain. (Note: In the case of Agfa, Bayer, Merck and other firms, the United States companies of the same name have been thoroughly divorced from any German connection and are now operated by Americans with full Government knowledge of their operations.) The German Agfa is blacklisted by the United States in Buenos Aires, Rio, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Spain. Much of the business of these companies is handled by the Banco Aleman Transatlantico, which operates under the same title in Valparaiso, Chile, and Montevideo, Uruguay, but under its original name of the Deutsche Uberseeische Bank in Madrid. Other blacklisted German financial institutions include the Banco Germanico de la America del Sud, which, in addition to the places above, also runs in Asuncion, Paraguay, and the blacklisted Banco Frances e Italiano para la America del Sud. There is a whole file of German insurance companies and other financial entities, of import and export companies and other businesses. None of these are any secret to our embassies in Latin America. They've done a swell job in going after them, but it's only the start, and comparatively little has been done to drive home the danger to Latin-American countries themselves.

News of the Churchill-Roosevelt-Chiang Kai-shek Conference at Cairo broke here early this morning. Only official attitude noticeable so far is the desire to penalize broadcasting stations including the

news in their bulletins. Whenever news of any special importance breaks, Major Farias, Director of Radio Communications, and his monitors at the Post Office, set themselves out to time the duration of the local as against the world news, using a stop-watch to do so. If the world news is given more time than the local, the station gets a reprimand. Consequently, if an announcer finds, in the course of reading a bulletin, that he still has plenty of time and reads the world news slower than he had read the local news, he is liable to get his station into trouble.

DECEMBER 1st

A month of work and Colonel Perón has brought forth his new Secretariat of Labor and Welfare, which, from all appearances, looks as if it's going to be one of the most powerful of the regime's entities and the busy colonel's make-or-break stepping stone upward. The new department, which will be attached to the Presidency and give Perón ministerial rating (although not a Minister's portfolio) is so broad and all-inclusive that the few independent labor leaders still around loose are already terming it an attempt to create a super company union patterned on Hitler's *Arbeits Ministerium*. There won't be much that labor will be able to do without the Secretariat's O.K. It will absorb the National Labor Department, the Industrial and Social Section of the National Office of Public Health and Social Aid, the Accident Section of the National Pension Fund, the National Cheap Housing Commission, the Rents Board, the Postal Savings Bank, the National Unemployment Board and a couple of others. It even has designs on the Maternity Fund, which grants subsidies to working mothers. (All working women have to pay a tax destined to take care of them if they become *mamás*, married or single. Some protest bachelors should also pay.) All other official entities dealing with social welfare may continue under their present organizations, but will be controlled and eventually taken over by the new department. Provincial departments and offices connected with labor will become regional branches of Perón's super-secretariat. Labor questions handled by the National Railway Board and the National Transport Co-ordination Committee, previously semi-autonomous

bodies, will be under his charge. So will all independent natural associations and even immigration questions relating to anybody who works.

Thus the control is complete. Perón will be able to rule on workers' salaries; what sort of social security or pensions they get. If they still refuse to be good boys, he will be able to deport them without even asking another department. He has already pretty well broken the labor front with promises and coercion. His first step was to dissolve the left-wing group of the Confederacion General de Trabajo, the parent local labor body like the old A.F.L. He won over other leaders by pledging he would get them their rights "without outside agitators." A week or so ago he fixed up an agreement in the printing trade, resulting in certain wage increases and bettered conditions affecting some 1,500 men. He got the *frigorificos* to hand out increases, privately advising employers he would do something to give them a break in short order, which some have taken to mean passing on the increase to the housewife. The fiercely independent taxi men in Buenos Aires, who everybody thought might be the ring-leaders in any general strike, were handed special permission for as much gas as they wanted and now they cruise merrily around town, instead of being confined to hack stands.

Even though Argentina's gas shortage gets more acute, the drivers' problem is temporarily patched up by the rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul arrangement, and Perón isn't worried. He has concentrated mainly on workers' groups which hold the real control of railroads and other transportation.

The new Secretariat will also supervise conditions for migrant workers. A few days ago minimum wages that may be paid to this so-called gypsy labor were established. *Estancia* owners must now provide breakfasts of *maté* and coffee with cheese, cold meats or baked meat; lunch of soup and *puchero* and rest-hour *maté*. Even the dinner menu is outlined. The owners point out that while establishing minimum wages may be a good idea, these new arbitrary scales are made without any consultation as to their interests and rights. Since it will be impossible to apply some of the rates, they say it is going to mean a lessening of employment. (Harvesters, for instance, must be paid ten pesos per day. As this work is usually undertaken by a contractor employing a gang, the result has been

that the contractor himself undertakes the cuttings and ordinary *estancia* peons prepare improvised stacks, instead of having them done professionally by *emparvadores*, as previously. Failure of some contractors to engage their usual gang has left many to wander over the *pampa* unable to find work.)

These arguments being as they may, the point is that both for migratory workers and those in the cities, increases and better conditions are all being handled as Perón handouts which he alone can grant or cancel. "As in Germany," independent leaders are saying, "there will probably be upped wages and better conditions at first. But the Government is going to be the one to decide from the highest to the lowest what and how labor will act, its rights and its duties. And we'll have nothing to say."

The decree establishing the new Secretariat states: "Experience gathered in countries which have centralized State social welfare has demonstrated the advantages of this system. National unity will be strengthened by the improved social justice which is our fundamental and irrenounceable purpose. The fulfillment of these duties will bring about mutual advantages for the productive forces . . . provide a basis of peaceful living together within the Christian principles which form our historic tradition." All this is dutifully reported at length by the press, which is beginning to reflect its realization that Perón is *the* guy in this Government.

Nothing, of course, is said about the roaring general strike in seaside Mar del Plata, even though in this case it is not directed against the national regime but the municipality. Painters and carpenters, waiters and maids are all out, supposedly because of a new bicycle registration tax, which provides that they have all to pay six pesos (\$1.50) to use their bikes. A local issue it may be, but it is certainly another sign of the unrest here and a test of what may come. Nor is anything said about how miners in Mendoza district have recently been so near starvation that they ate their cats, or how industrial wages are slowly climbing upward (8.3 over last year) to a point where they may suddenly break and force employers to close down.

The police are intensifying their drive on pro-democratic organizations they consider suspect. Last night, with as flimsy an excuse as they have yet given, the De Gaulle Fighting French headquarters were arbitrarily shuttered. Police Chief Colonel Emilio Ramírez, said that following the arrests of two men found painting such slogans as "Restore Democracy," "Break with the Axis" and "Re-establish Relations with the Soviet," it had been found they were "working with the connivance of the Committee and consequently it had been resolved to close it until such time as the matter is completely cleared up." The Free French people, whose chief, Albert Guérin, is now visiting Algiers as representative of all Fighting French groups in Latin America, does not know if the men arrested, Horst Stenguer and Julio Berlin, were members. They point out that the De Gaulle literature found in their rooms were simply the kind of leaflets distributed free of charge to anybody who might drop in and ask for a supply.

I know Guérin and his crowd have always steered clear of any propaganda affecting Argentine affairs, realizing it was unsafe to do anything but promote their own movement, send food and clothing to their forces and collect cash for Free French headquarters. They think pressure by Vichy—with which Argentina still maintains relations—was responsible. The Vichy Chargé d'Affaires some time ago deprived Guérin of French citizenship, and has always been bitter about the fact that the De Gaullists were allowed to operate at all, even though all kinds of hurdles have been placed in their path.

Free Frenchers also tell me that Vichy had advised its Buenos Aires Embassy of annoyance over the part played by the Argentine Committee at the recent Latin-American Free French meeting in Montevideo, when strong demands were made for the removal of Henri Hoppenot as Free French Ambassador to Washington. The Free French newspaper, a smart little publication called *La France Nouvelle*, has also been pointing up Vichy spy activities for the Axis in Latin America. The Comité de Gaulle, whose membership runs into several thousands, has, however, been extremely careful not

to touch Argentine affairs. The present closure appears to them to have been cooked up.

Arrests of suspected anti-Administrationists are still going strong, especially up in San Juan and Santa Fe, where it is officially announced that twenty-two were arrested. Schoolteachers and professors also got a warning today that they would be fired "if found spreading propaganda and ideologies contrary to the country's social welfare." Deans of all national universities were ordered to expel students spreading such ideologies.

It may be just a desire to build up local tourist travel, but the regime is trying to limit as much as possible the annual summer exodus of well-to-do *Argentinos* who prefer to take their vacations across the Rio de La Plata, on the Riviera-like Uruguayan beaches. Not only do they absorb plenty of sun-tan but these Argentines leave lots of pesos in Punta del Este, Atlantida and the other Atlantic Coast spots. That's not all. Few come back without some feeling to the effect that "Over in Uruguay we can really breathe free air." This sort of thinking, the military evidently feel, is bad business, so newspapers and radio stations have been given a polite word to hold down on any advertising for Uruguayan resorts. These suggestions are never put in writing lest they boomerang. Word is merely passed around in an indirect way, but woe betide those who pretend not to have heard. Radio outlets who have ignored such verbal hints, usually discover that the technical inspectors have found their wiring is defective or that they are not complying with some fire-exit law, and they get it in the neck just the same.

DECEMBER 3rd

Tall, hard, handsome Colonel Perón, a strange contrast to diminutive, tired-eyed little *Palito* Ramírez, raised his hand over the Gospels, smiled around at the impressive group of *militares* in the Salon Versailles of the Municipal Council building yesterday, and took over his post as new ministerial Secretary of Labor and Welfare. All the Cabinet Ministers and top men of the GOU were there. If anybody

still had any doubt about the importance of the occasion, Ramírez' flowery, praise-filled speech, soon put them at rest. Perón's address to the nation was carried by Radio del Estado and fed to all stations in the country, but the good *coronel* suspected that his *compañero*, Press Chief Ladvocat might sabotage his debut, and personally called the stations and the newsreels to do the needful.

Perón's strong sense of showmanship, his Goering-like uniforms and his constant smile hide a relentless drive which insures getting him what he's after. Fellow officers say his cleaning bills must be terrific, for he invariably wears a fresh white tunic with his khaki breeches and stands out in the middle of any photographic group, among the more conventional Cabinet members and officers. Wags insist his polished riding boots, which he wears day in and day out, are perhaps considered necessary equipment because of the way he is galloping to clear any hurdles and ride herd on any opposition till he lands in the Presidential chair. The colonel's speech bore the old Nazi-flavored refrain that employers, workers and the State were the parties to all social problems and that they and nobody else would arrange the solution "avoiding the useless squandering of energies and values." In other words, labor leaders keep out. "I am no friend of promises or half measures," Perón said. "As a simple soldier (all the *militares* love to keep harping that they are only simple soldiers; some impolite Argentines suggest they are *too* simple) I have in the past been a mere spectator of the disputes between capital and labor. The State formerly kept out of these disputes; it did not take any particular interest in the working class. This was a suicidal policy and it is to be a thing of the past."

Like many a United States *politico*, Perón said labor unions were necessary, but he made it far plainer than most of them would dare that they must be "good unions" which his department will control. Perón's new job has focused more and more attention on this "President without Title." His methods have a familiar ring; he believes in striking the enemy with audacity, taking advantage of his opponents' errors, gaining time and then advancing quickly. He speaks the language of the *calle*, likes good eating and hearty living, and goes to the workmen's *boliches* to talk to them and convince them he is their true pal. His promises have affected far more than just labor groups, and he has convinced many here that he represents the more

liberal sector of the Army oligarchy, that he will be able to work with the political parties and yet keep the Army in control, that he knows his way around the intricate problems of running a government.

Perón is a smart tactician. He meets visitors with a hearty smile and a handshake. He likes a good story, even at his own expense; laughs loudly at his own jokes. While admired and idolized by many of the younger men in the Army—a colonels' colonel—he is probably more aware of the civilian mind than any of the other GOU men. Up to now he has gotten along pretty well with Ramírez; insists that they have been personal friends of long standing. Although not yielding the spotlight to anybody, he apparently believes he can manage affairs so that he will get the credit for the good things the military is doing and shift the blame for unpopular acts on to others. He is already courting popularity by promising to redress wrongs or secure alleviation of too stringent measures taken by some of his colleagues. People in many walks of life have found that an appeal to Perón goes a long way. While this is earning him the hatred of many fellow officers, it is assuring him a great measure of popularity. Younger elements have been approached on the basis that he would save them from dictatorship and fascism. He has also persuaded many of the undergraduates that he wants to clean up the university mess and that recent examinations were made easy as a result of his intervention.

Although generally little known at the start of this revolution, Perón has always been one of the most dynamic of the *coroneles*; has worked diligently to put his own men in key spots and keep in close touch with them. A widower (his wife died in 1936), he lives in a modest five-room apartment in a modernistic building in a middle-class Buenos Aires district with his auburn-haired, seventeen-year-old daughter and his housekeeper. A hard worker, one of the things Army men liked about him was that in the first scramble for favored posts he took the back-breaking little-known jobs, although he has since started on the way to building them up to star rank. He gets to his office at eight; plunges right into a day which keeps the Secretariat hopping. He lunches at home, generally takes a brief *siesta*, but gets out and around every night. Theatre people are his favorites, and he is interesting himself in the present bitter war between the

producers and the footlight folk. He practically holds court nightly at famed tango leader Juan D'Arienzo's restaurant, talking with all kinds of people, sponging up information and impressions and keeping the place in high good humor. He fences; once held a championship with the foils; boxes, loves exercise and keeping fit.

Handsome, with a high forehead, his general effect is spoiled on close-up by a blotchy skin and eyes somewhat too close set. He has a keen, penetrating glance that misses nothing. Perón seems to fancy himself a radio speaker, but his delivery—which he is evidently trying to develop away from his former barracks-room or parade-ground rasp—is too forced. In trying to put over a radio personality, something of the humbug comes to the surface. This proves he is not brilliant enough to realize that naturalness is the secret of success on the air.

DECEMBER 4th

Another loud thud on the noggin of Buenos Aires' night life, this time in the interests of "strict morality." Limits were announced today on the area in which "dancings"—the Buenos Aires version of the taxi-dance cabaret—are to be allowed to run. If strictly carried out, it will mean the end of many of the after-dark spots which now line the Arcades on Avenida Leandro Alem, near the port zone. At one time there were hundreds and hundreds of these places with intriguing names in all languages, but war, which has cut shipping, has trimmed down the number of potential customers, although the spots still open seem as gay and smoke-filled as ever. Buenos Aires' rather strict ideas regarding morality have a rather curious result on these spots. The girls will come and sit on your lap, try to coax you into buying as many drinks as you can hold, but won't go upstairs. However, if you are willing to wait around till four, things can be arranged. What with the amateur competition, I have never been able to figure out how some of these places keep going, but seemingly they do, although their lot now will be more difficult. Years ago, Buenos Aires' bawdy houses were among the world's most fabulous establishments. I've heard many a granddaddy here

tell stories about the famed San Isidro joint which, despite its three hundred rooms (Could those old guys have been kidding?), kept crowds who came out on the special Saturday night excursions lined up three and four deep outside each of the trellised porches. The fact that the old Viceroy's palace was located just across the way, gave many a *caballero* the excuse to protest that he was out visiting historic monuments rather than indulging in amatory pursuits, if questioned.

DECEMBER 6th

The tripartite communiqué on the Three Power Conference at Teheran came over the air this afternoon at *siesta* time. "*Los Tres Grandes*"—The Three Greats—is how the papers describe it. The conference should help improve Argentine understanding that the Soviet and the rest of the United Nations have the same peace aims as well as war aims.

Today's *Prensa* carries an annual editorial tribute to our own United States good-will efforts down here. *Prensa* points out that back in July, 1941, four months before Pearl Harbor, an organization called the Asociación de Difusión Inter-Americana, comprising Americans and North American business firms here, was founded to make the United States better known to Argentina and Argentines better known to the States. *Prensa* describes the work done as useful, varied and practical. Granted legal status on November 15, 1941, this organization prepares radio broadcasts, publishes folders, distributes music, commemorates independence dates and anniversaries of historical events connected with the American Republics, distributes instructive pictures, some of which, with official authorization, are exhibited in the Republic's schools, and maintains scholarships for Argentines who may wish to take courses of instruction in North American factories and establishments. Aside from all this, the Asociación, through an agreement with the National Research Council in Washington, undertakes important bibliographical efforts, obtaining scientific works which, due to the war, cannot be obtained elsewhere. In *Prensa's* opinion, the example shown by the United

States residents in Argentina might well be followed by Argentines living not only in the United States, but in other American countries because: "The educational work thus accomplished would be received with sympathy wherever it was undertaken not only in the present, but in the future. We need to know each other better, and the spreading of information tending to unite men and entities, artistic, scientific and cultural activities among brotherly countries, can only be described as patriotic endeavor." That—from Latin America's leading daily—should help answer some of the *yanqui* imperialist viewers-with-alarm.

DECEMBER 7th

Practically every pro-democratic organization here has been barred, banned or beaten out of existence, but the nationalists go merrily along. Passing along Calle Piedras the other day I spotted the headquarters of the *Alianza de la Juventud Nacionalista*, probably the strongest of these groups, signing up new members by the hundreds. They still plaster the town with their neutrality-praising posters, hold mass meetings and attempt to influence public opinion against democracy. It used to be that the nationalists, many of them Nazi-inspired, were not taken seriously by most Argentines. But since the advent of the new Government it becomes increasingly apparent that they enjoy some kind of special favor. They have always cloaked themselves in super-patriotism of the very kind the Government is now putting into effect. They haven't always pulled together, but the Nazis have always backed several horses and have used these groups to hide their own behind-the-scene movements.

Here are the most important:

Alianza de Juventud Nacionalista: This group has now emerged as the most powerful of all. Its hero is Argentina's bloodiest dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas; its pet hate: the Yankees. Operating from headquarters in Buenos Aires, it has established fourteen "forts" throughout the interior; has an estimated 50-60,000 members. Biggest annual show is the May Day parade, but it works all year round, fighting all pro-democratic causes under the guise of "elimi-

nating foreign interference," demanding nationalization of the telephone companies, the *frigorificos*, the power and light plants, the railways, etc. It doesn't openly support the Nazi cause, but instead concentrates on demands for neutrality which is Berlin's program for Argentina. The Alianza has long since outgrown its parent organization, which, from its inception, had a large number of retired and reserve officers. Active leaders are Enrique Oses, editor of the Nazi daily *Pampero*, and Raimundo Doll.

Afirmacion Argentina: Formed mainly to fight Accion Argentina, the pro-democratic organization, since dissolved. It was the first to attempt to form a united front of Argentine fascists. Less militant a group than the others, it might be described as a center in which members of different nationalist factions come together to plan activities. Supported indirectly by the German Embassy, it publishes a strong pro-neutrality paper *Choque (Clash)* patterned after the *Voelkischer Beobachter*. Of its leading personalities who have been taken up by the new regime, General Basilio Pertiné, now Mayor of the City of Buenos Aires is the most important. Leopoldo Lugones, Jr., who organized a special Gestapo for Presidential Secretary Gonzalez, has always been an active member of the Afirmacion.

Legion Civica Argentina: Granddaddy of all present-day Argentina nationalist organizations; the Legion was founded in 1930 by General José Felix Uriburu. Aimed especially to rope in postal and telegraph workers and clerks, customs men, railway employees, etc., it continued long after the Uriburu Government. With the unlimited support of Uriburu, the Legion was officially recognized as a military organization and, on May 30, 1931, was issued guns and ammunition, uniforms, etc., by the War Ministry, acting under Uriburu's orders. The printing shop of the Central Post Office had to grind out its propaganda material free of charge. With this help, the Legion was able to open branches throughout the country, attract many members of the monied class, students, lawyers, etc. Some old-timers from the Liga Patriotica Argentina, founded back in 1919 to combat strikers under the Irigoyen Administration, also joined in. There were armed attacks on the opposition, particularly on labor organizations, socialists, communists and radicals. The Legion—it is said—was even able to buy arms from free-booting *norteamericanos*, who came down here with excellent samples of machine guns and tear-gas

equipment. A chain of bloody aggression against political adversaries only began to taper off five or six years after Uriburu's death, but the Legion continued active, even though by the end of 1936 it was little heard of outside its own ranks. From a terror organization against political adversaries of the Uriburu regime it developed into today's military conspiracy, active, 100 percent fascist group similar to the *Cagoulards* in France. The organization has always kept its arms, has recruited members of the reserve forces and has exercised important influence on the military. Closer to the Italian fascists than to the Nazis, its strongest branches have been in districts like Cordoba, where there are large Italian sections of the population. Leaders of the Legion have been Carlos P. Ribero and Juan Pobio, both militarists, Alberto Uriburu, the late General's son, and General Francisco Medina.

Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas, Juan Manuel de Rosas: This is the high school of Argentine fascism. To give Argentine fascists a national *criollo* tradition, Rosas, dictator from 1829 to 1852, and one of the most hated, pitiless and absolute rulers ever known in South America, has been resurrected. Nationalists regard that period of Argentine history as one of "authority, discipline and political and economic independence." Dr. Carlos Ibarguren, who has some standing as an historian and writer (one-time President of the Comision Nacional de Cultura), has been the leader of this group. His book on Rosas somehow managed to win a national prize in literature. Rosistas base their propaganda on one principal factor: The fight against foreigners. A list of active members of the Institute contains many important Argentine names, and military titles aren't the least of these. They include Dr. Manuel Galvez, José A. Guiraldes, José Maria Rosa, Jr., and Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo. Activities haven't been limited to intellectual and theoretical leadership. They devote much attention to influencing professors and, through them, hundreds and hundreds of university students. Their influence in the Centro Argentino de Estudios de Derecho (Law Students Center) has been important, and the *Instituto* has always had a kind of semi-official blessing. Because its members enjoy good financial status, the group has never lacked for funds; has branches in all university cities and runs a thriving publishing house—*Editorial Mazorca*—which issues 200 titles a year, despite its being on the

United States and British statutory lists. *Mazorca*, meaning ear of corn, was the title Rosas gave to his own private Gestapo.

Nuevo Orden: Still another group of Rosistas; directed by Rodolfo Irazista, and includes Alberto Lezcano, Raimundo Doll (that name always seems to turn up), Roberto A. Quiroga. Members are mostly young nationalists in the interior, members of the Sindicato de Estudios Nacionalistas. Their publication is *La Voz del Plata*. Though relatively limited in number, their ideology and political influence over the nationalist movement is important. They have always had the idea of a military conspiracy as the basis of their organization.

Consejo Superior del Nacionalismo: Central body of all nationalist organizations, it was founded in July, 1941, by retired General Juan Bautista Molina, with himself as the chief and with well-known fascists on the Board. The reaction to its founding announcement, however, was so unfavorable that even Castillo couldn't buck it and he gave orders to then Interior Minister Miguel Culaciatti to refuse a license. Despite the lack of legal status, it was established under cover and has taken a more and more important part in guiding fascist activities.

Union Nacional Argentina "Patria" (Para Afirmary Total Restauracion Independencia Argentina): Founded in May, 1941, this is the chief organization of Dr. Manuel Fresco, one of Argentina's leading fascists. Followers are found principally in the Province of Buenos Aires and members include many underpaid, disgruntled, small-time Government employees, teachers, etc. They rallied around Fresco because he had money to spend for propaganda and because they felt that, like themselves, he had found democracy didn't work and the authoritarian way out might be better. The propaganda line used to attract members has been from the beginning that the Castillo Government paid them far less than they were worth, and that their only hope was to form their own organization. Many of the suggestions which have led to military reorganizations of various bureaus are believed to have come from members of this and similar groups. Fresco is the uncontested *Fuehrer* of his crowd. Those who have seen similar groups grow in Europe say his working methods are those of a tenth carbon copy of Dr. Goebbels. He uses the most vulgar anti-Semitic line, together with a pseudo-revolutionary,

pseudo-socialist and apparently anti-capitalist overtones. Fresco has tried several newspaper ventures but none really began to click until he issued the morning tabloid *Cabildo*, which was supposed to take some of the readers who didn't want to pay the increased price when the pro-democratic *El Mundo* raised from five to ten *centavos*. *Cabildo* is now almost the official Government organ. It is widely read because its editorials have managed to anticipate, if not actually inspire, the official policies.

Highest authority in the hierarchy of Argentine fascism is the mythological Junta de Gobierno del Nacionalismo Argentino. Little is known about its members, but best information is that top directors include: General Basilio B. Pertiné, General Alejandro Von der Becke, Admiral Leon Scasso, General Martinez Pita, General Francisco Reynolds, General Benjamin Menendez, General Angel Maria Zuloaga, General Avelino J. Alvarez and *Coronel* Patricio Sorondo. Argentine pro-Democrats have always been inclined to underestimate the danger of Argentine native fascism, probably for two reasons: One is that the foreign groups, Germans, Italians and Japs, have always appeared more important, secondly that local fascists sometimes involve people whom it is just not possible to investigate—unless a really pro-democratic Government were in power. Evidence is hard to get and no one is willing to make open allegations that could not be proved.

So much in the history of Argentine nationalism is comparable to what developed in Germany and Italy, that the comments of X who knows what happened over there from first-hand experience are of special interest.

Before June 4th we had the idea that the nationalists had no leader of their own and that therefore they would probably never amount to very much. Their technique seems to have been to work on the Army to throw out the Administration and to have the Army itself set up the anti-foreign, anti-labor, anti-liberal, anti-democratic Government which the nationalists themselves have long ardently desired. The Army provided the leadership, and because it had the respect of the public, at first had popular support. Possibly it has never realized itself that it was being used by extremists who in turn were merely following Berlin's orders.

While during the past year or two many of these groups appeared

to be working at cross purposes, it becomes increasingly apparent now that actually it was all leading to the same thing. Castillo could hardly have been rated as any great friend of the democracies, but under his Government business could at least be run by private enterprise. Radio stations, while chafing at the bit, were still calling their own tunes (this literally) and allowed to operate under elastic regulations. While limited by the state of siege, newspapers could still say a great deal. Congress met and, while not completely effective, was nevertheless still a public forum that couldn't be gagged. Most political parties were allowed to function. Not all their speeches could be reported in full over the air and in the press, but there was still an opportunity for debate. Pro-democratic organizations were still able to meet, knit socks, hand out propaganda, collect pesos, etc., for the causes in which they believed. But such things, in the opinion of the nationalists and their supporters in the Army, the clergy and elsewhere, were merely a sign of "decadent democracy," a "submission to foreign imperialism or tutelage," and proof of "exotic" communist influence.

As in Germany, the first nationalist groups were like the *Strassenkaempfer*—street terrorists whose main task was intimidation and terrorization of their political adversaries. The groups that played the same role here in Argentina were the Legion Civica Argentina, the Liga Republicana, the Liga de Mayo and the Liga Patriotica Argentina. Next were what in Germany were called the *Vorkaempfer*, the organizations which prepared the road to power. The Argentine counterparts can't be compared with Hitler's National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, although somewhat similar. All the groups related to General Molina's Consejo Superior, including the Rosistas and the bunch commanded by *Pampero* editor Oses, have similar aims, however, although their historical models are the Austrian Heimatschutz, or perhaps the French Cagoullards. Their outward characteristics were the same: Conspiracy, secrecy, mystery and operations with the Army. And the way in which the Ramírez coup was accomplished with so few actually known leaders, shows that influence was exerted in the right places. Most Argentines forgot until it was too late that even General Uriburu in the 1930 coup had less than 2,000 men under his command when he overthrew Irigoyen. Once the organized group of colonels took the lead, others

in the Army followed. What is still missing in Argentina is some equivalent of Die Volkspartei.

The nationalists have tried to develop something like Hitler's N.S.D.A.P., but it hasn't worked so far. This hasn't worried the nationalists unduly, because they feel they have accomplished their aims through the military. Broad-thinking Argentines point out that when the military is unable to rally popular support, it will not be able to last forever. The regime now seems to be trying to develop some sort of popular following, partly through its own efforts, partly by eliminating the opposition. To do that job the Government is stepping up its propaganda, making special appeals to win labor support, seeking to win over elements within the basic political parties and thus work with the nationalists to develop its own Volkspartei. They try to convince industrialists and the *estancieros* they are being saved from communism. In this latter case, however, decrees reducing rentals on all properties both urban and rural and the constant growing interference in all forms of private enterprise, have succeeded in antagonizing the class which has hitherto ruled Argentina from within.

DECEMBER 8th

The Inter Allied Committees—made up of English, American and all other United Nations groups tonight closed the mammoth *kermesse* they have been running for three days and nights at the Ambassadeurs, a huge converted night club in the fairly new Palermo Chico neighborhood. These affairs do bring in money, but they also make the organizers go through many an anxious moment. The nationalists, of course, are bitterly opposed to the collection of funds for Allied or United Nations purposes, screaming the pesos might better be used on Argentina's own poor. This attitude, fortunately, is not characteristic of the majority of *criollos*, who roll up and dish out the coin with a smile and a cheer. Squads of police, both uniformed and plain-clothes were posted about, and some nationalists were caught trying to set the spot on fire. This year no gambling is allowed.

The regime is out to appease Argentina's Jewish population, apparently feeling effects outside might be favorable. Certain anti-Semitic decrees taken by provincial authorities have been revoked or at least toned down. In the province of Entre Rios where anti-Semitism has been most rampant, a number of Jewish municipal and provincial employees, dismissed on charges of communism, have been recently reinstated. Charters granted certain Jewish organizations, which were canceled at the height of the anti-Semitic outburst, have been restored and some schools allowed to open. The principal street in a small town which serves as a center for one of the Baron de Hirsch agricultural colonies, is to be allowed to use the name of the colony's founder. The name had been changed to San Martín. But the nationalist anti-Semitic organizations are still active and reports of Jews fleeing the country because of persecution, of others being deprived of their citizenship, persist since the number of admitted anti-Semites in official Government positions is on the increase.

DECEMBER 10th

Axis propagandists who have been having a field day spreading, praising and rehashing Nebraska Senator Hugh Butler's charges of reckless United States boondoggle-spending south of the border, this week began getting a taste of their own medicine. Answers to Butler, from the States and from Buenos Aires, Rio, Santiago, Lima and other capitals have begun appearing in increasing numbers in newspapers and over the air, citing first-hand rebuttals and proofs. Stung to action, our Government agencies who have gotten the brunt of Butler's charges, are proving that they know a few of Doc Goebbels' tricks. Today, for example, leading papers throughout Latin America feature declarations by Herbert Hoover, Wendell Willkie, Tom Dewey and Alf Landon, asserting in no indefinite terms that the Republican Party as well as most other *norteamericanos* approve of the Good Neighbor policy without restrictions and that it is not a political issue.

Senator Joseph Guffey's charges that Butler's once-over-lightly Latin-American junket was arranged by the *Reader's Digest*, which

used Butler as "the catspaw in a bit of journalistic ghost writing," has also caused a strong impression, especially since *Selecciones*, the Spanish edition of the *Digest*, has the largest circulation of any magazine in Latin America and is thus widely known. The reply made by Senator Kenneth C. McKellar showing how Butler had been "grossly and grievously misled" has also been given a big play. Latin Americans who get most of their news from United States agencies like the A.P. and the U.P. have had a full diet of detail on the row, including extensive editorial quotes from papers of every political shade. Our own pro-democratic propaganda down here seems to be making some progress, although there is still plenty to be done. Newspapers concentrate on our news and that of the United Nations. Radio stations have done the same and our short-wave broadcasting which, not long ago, was often far off base and silly, has been strengthened and improved. Still reckless charges of the Butler type help undo many of these things. I've heard many Latin Americans say: "Some of us who know the States can understand how these things come about, but to the everyday person it only makes the Nazi charges sound more true."

DECEMBER 11th

Finding any favorable press comment from abroad about what goes on here is so rare that it's no wonder the papers today devote galleys of type to an article in the *South American Journal*, a London financial paper hailing the regime's complete reversal of agricultural policy. Plans for encouraging a maximum food output are regarded by the *Journal* as indicating Argentine preparations to help feed war-ravaged Europe. The fact that Allied armies, as in the last war, are dependent on Argentine meat, is also stressed. Largely due to the sale of this meat, Argentina's foreign trade has been well maintained despite the difficulties of war which, among other things, have ruined the cereal export trade. Manufactured articles have also played a big part in creating a great surplus of export values. All of this accumulated foreign exchange recently enabled Argentina to repatriate two-thirds of the Federal sterling indebtedness held in

London. The *Journal* always manages to pack a little anti-United States poison in some of its pro-Argentine articles, and invariably the Administration suggests that they be played up here. There's something to this which bears checking if it could be done from London.

In sharp contrast is an article in the *London Times*—*verboden* here but already translated and passed from hand to hand in many an office and workshop. "There is much to commend in a policy of making Argentines more Argentine; there is everything to condemn in a course which leads only to repression and retrogression. In an age when most minds are moving toward a higher freedom and tolerance, Great Britain, with her long tradition of friendship and intimate commercial ties with Argentina, has watched, with something deeper than regret, Argentina's aloofness from the struggle and the anti-democratic practices of her present rulers. The muzzling . . . of the press proves how little these practices are approved by public opinion. A Government which does not profess to speak for the mass of the people and certainly does not serve the national interest, is making an attempt to rehabilitate principles against which the United Nations are now waging their victorious fight."

(Later)

The vast, flat *pampa* land has been good to Argentina once more. The harvest is now pretty well in, although down South they are still working on the wheat, oats, linseed, barley and rye. The average yield per *hectarea* has practically set a record. Acreage under wheat and linseed was not so great, but nevertheless between the two crops, Argentina will produce nine million tons, of which not more than three million are required locally. Carry-overs of wheat and linseed are so substantial that probably by January 1st Argentina will have available surpluses of seven million tons of wheat and close to three million tons of linseed. Yesterday's rains have been greatly beneficial for the growing maize, of which much more has been sown than last year. Crop experts tell me it looks splendid. No wonder the regime feels optimistic. There will be a million tons of cereals and linseed per month to sell for 1944; stocks so great that Buenos Aires feels certain the United Nations, with all their talk of sanctions and all their complaints about neutrality, will have to

buy. If the war ends soon, Argentines think, they will be able to sell freely. Even if it continues, much of the maize will be usable as fuel, the linseed as fuel oil, and the Allies will continue sailing to the Rio de la Plata for what they need.

Cattle breeders and landowners, while somewhat anxious about official plans, are still not overly worried. There is talk of upped taxes on export cattle and details of a new land rental decree were announced yesterday. *Estancieros* know land rentals are to be reduced and the reduction made retroactive to April. In many cases landowners obtain advances from the banks based on the year's rentals they obtain for their land, and many use this as capital to finance their other activities. They may be hard hit but, in the majority, the smaller landowners are the ones most affected, as big *estancieros* farm their own property. Many have already notified tenants of their decision to take over and work their own *campo*, as under the new conditions renting doesn't avail them anything.

General Diego I. Mason, who, as Minister of Agriculture, is watching the *estancia* situation, is something of a contrast among the *militares*. Like them, he insists he is an Army man. Unlike them, he doesn't then immediately set out to disprove the fact by issuing long series of decrees, rules and regulations governing subjects on which he can only be a layman. Mason is one of the few *ministros* who has quietly sought out the best advice he can get and actually put some civilian suggestions into effect.

DECEMBER 12th

For the first time in as long as anybody can remember, an Axis spying agent has been publicly tried, convicted and jailed here. But while the regime has ordered the case given all kinds of press attention to show just how much it is doing, confidential sources indicate that the authorities apparently have no intention of further probing the widespread spy net operating with the aid of Spanish Falangists. Small, thin, Federal Judge Horacio Fox, in sentencing Rosendo Almozara Lombara, twenty-three-year-old Spanish medical student to two years for espionage activities against the United States, said that

Lombara was merely the go-between of a clever and powerful ring using neutral Argentina as a base. Lombara, like many others engaged in similar activities, was employed as a member of the crew of the Spanish liner *Cabo de Hornos* which operates in regular South Atlantic service between Spain and Argentina. Obviously a novice at the game, he was arrested by a Coast Guardsman while leaving the port zone in a taxi last May 11th. The car was held for a routine inspection and Lombara's nervous behavior aroused suspicion. The surprised Coast Guardsman found him carrying three reels of film and several envelopes. Opened, they disclosed thirty photo copies of letters, documents and codes, some \$5,600, United States, plus 16,300 pesos in Argentine bills. Lombara, who figured on the crew list as a male nurse, tried to bribe his captors, offering the whole of the money if they destroyed the pictures. But this time the Argentine authorities could not be bought and naval experts were called in to examine the film and copies. They said the papers were packed with secret military information which could have only been obtained in the United States' military and naval codes. The report, as mentioned by the judge in passing sentence, "proved the existence of a powerful spy ring, whose work was to gather information to damage or prejudice the United States in her war effort." Argentina, he added, "was being used as a point of contact between two spy rings for the purpose of forwarding the information obtained in Europe whence in due course it could be sent on to Germany and used." Lombara's story was that he had received the documents from a man named Torria in Vigo, Spain, for delivery to an accomplice in Buenos Aires. He was to go to a little café on a midtown side street, take a table near the toilet until a man dropped a cigarette at his feet and whispered the code word, "Madrid." He was to answer with another code "Cibeles," and then, if satisfied, he was to enter the closet and hand over the envelopes. Police kept a watch on the place for several days, but, needless to say, the other man never showed up.

The case itself is only one in the whole Spanish Falangist spy set-up. What's important is that the Government seems little interested in really digging into the mess. Berlin has been using Madrid agents increasingly during the past two years, particularly since German spies have been exposed by various Latin-American countries, by the Hemisphere Political Defense Committee, and by

Argentina's own now dissolved Congressional Committee. These rings are known to include numerous local militant Nazis who, since the stoppage of German transatlantic vessels by the British and American blockade, have depended on Spanish ships for the transportation of their propaganda, money and instructions. Of course, the Spanish ships which come to Latin America have to pass through the British Navicert control, but no matter how thorough this check is—and sometimes I think it's not very thorough at all—it has not been too difficult apparently for the Spaniards to get some things through. Anybody considered suspicious is usually taken off and the Spanish authorities, thankful that they can still operate, submit good-naturedly. But with so many Spanish boats coming to the Argentine, it's impossible to check everybody and, in addition, the Spanish diplomatic valise and the Nazis' own diplomatic pouch, are carried. The British make every effort to be sure the German valise doesn't get too big, but diplomatic valises being a general term, they sometimes cover a whole trunkful of papers. If the Argentine authorities were really serious about eliminating Axis espionage within their borders, all sorts of steps could be taken. But, as the present case shows, the only thing done is to make a big play when some extremely obvious case comes up and then forget about it as quickly as possible.

(Later)

Atwitter with preparations for more than a week, Argentina today is putting on an official love feast for Paraguay's chesty, broad-beamed President Higinio Moríñigo, such as rarely before has been extended an official visitor. The show reminds me of nothing less than one of those turn-outs Musso always used to give Hitler, and Hitler used to toss for the balcony-bouncer. Moríñigo sailed down the Parana on the freshly painted river steamer *Ciudad de Asuncion*. When the boat tied up at the North Basin a little after five o'clock yesterday evening, crowds, both the genuinely curious and Government and municipal employees dismissed early for the occasion, lined the streets and put on a show of enthusiasm, cheering and waving Argentine and Paraguayan flags. There were plenty of official back-thumping *abrazos* for Moríñigo and his party and columns of

troops and marines took up the march while Ramírez and the guest of honor clambered into a horse-drawn state carriage for a drive through bannered streets. Everywhere the official poster pasters had been busy plastering windows and walls with a Hollywoodized version of the Moriñigo countenance, so fancy, in fact, that wags immediately pointed out that Moriñigo probably couldn't recognize himself. He was put up in the elaborate town house of Senora Adela Maria Harilaos de Olmos, the same mansion which housed Pope Pius XII, when, as Cardinal Pacelli, he visited here. This mansion makes any Vanderbilt establishment look a mere cottage and is always pointed out to tourists as the house that was built the wrong way round.

Next there was an official reception in the Casa Rosada and then a brilliant turn-out for the foreign diplomatic corps. By comparison, the reception given Moriñigo during his recent visit to the States was a drop-in tea party. The significance of this show is obvious. Accused of being a lone-wolf isolationist for so long that it's beginning to sting, Argentina is out to prove she has friends in Latin America—lots of friends. Paraguay, which many Argentines look down upon as a stockaded up-river Indian settlement, suits the purpose perfectly, for Asuncion has, in the years since the glory of Dictator Francisco Lopez, depended on Buenos Aires.

DECEMBER 13th

Another day of parades and celebrations, of brilliant bemedalled uniforms and speeches rolling out the most high-flown superlatives of Latin diplomatic courtship. Early this morning, probably before Moriñigo had a chance to even look through the vast, fabulous Harilaos mansion, or roll over for an extra nap in the immense gold bed originally purchased for His Holiness, he was aroused and, with his entourage, headed for a Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral. Right afterward the annual parade of Argentina's reservists began. Although these *desfiles* customarily bring out a fairly good turn-out, this one—first since the Army has been in control—was made a super-duper occasion, with possibly 100,000 in line. For weeks the

Army has been shrilling that not to march on the great day would be unpatriotic, that a man's best pals were his Army buddies and, furthermore, that there would be an extra-special display of fireworks the evening following the party, not to mention other ceremonies with dancing in the streets and lots of excitement.

Peak cheers of the day went to Moriñigo, not because he's overly popular, but because Argentines are evidently getting a little worn out with their own official cheering. However, many have been impressed by the show.

Argentina will take no steps against the Spanish Falangist spies, but Uruguay takes such things more seriously. In spite of the official silence, I learn that a probe has been made in Montevideo following an investigation on board the Spanish steamer *Monte Amboto* which called there en route to Buenos Aires. Two men are supposed to have been arrested and a large quantity of diamonds, smuggled in to be sold to pay for Axis activities in this continent, were seized. The Germans have long followed the practice of sending valuables nabbed in the occupied countries to the Americas by Spanish vessels, using the proceeds gained here to carry on espionage and sabotage. The Montevideo authorities, in addition to all this, have obtained important papers and documents which are said to affect activities in Argentina as well as elsewhere in the Americas. Some of this material will eventually reach the hands of the Committee for the Political Defense of the Hemisphere and result in corrective measures, but not in Buenos Aires.

DECEMBER 14th

Asuncion is never going to seem the same when Moriñigo gets back. There have been more parades, celebrations, demonstrations. All day long, martial music and speeches filled with fancy phrases, "from heart to heart," "eternal brothers," "pledge of true love and friendship." Speeches by Ramírez: "Our ideology is crystal clear and nothing shall divert its course"; and Moriñigo: "We are one race, Argentina is our beloved brother." Newsreel cameras, reporters and a new crop of posters. The public is amused but hardly thrilled.

In the midst of all the activity today, Ramírez had time to get off for a luncheon in the modernistic office building of the YPF State Oil Monopoly, celebrating its 36th anniversary. The speeches reminded me how important this industry, born as long ago as 1910, has grown. Able to under-cut competitors, to enjoy special favors and advantages, YPF, under energetic, ambitious management is looked upon as one of the favorite Government Departments, envied by more prosaic bureaus which have to depend upon routine sources of revenue. For one job they are worth a special note: Their beautifully designed, excellently fitted gas stations, devoid of advertising posters, which shadow our own highway drive-in spots.

Saw Pepe Arias' new film, *La Guerra la Gano Yo* (I Win the War) at the Ambassador last night. It is the first picture ever made here which smacks at Argentine fence-sitting, even if the blows are aimed more at neutrality profiteers than at the Government itself. Probably that's why it got by the censors at all. Arias is cast as the co-proprietor of a little neighborhood grocery, a local institution which combines all the traditions of the United States village store and the Manhattan A. & P. He and his Spanish *gallego* partner aren't doing very much until a socialite *mamá* snubs his son and Arias decides to go in for speculation on the rubber-tire market. His success is immediate. He expands into other fields and winds up with a town mansion, a liveried chauffeur and all the trimmings. The payoff comes when Arias, after turning down an English offer for his manganese supplies because it is not up to what the Germans would pay, gloats over the sinking of the ship on which a rival shipment is being carried because he now can double his price. He wakes with a heart-sickening thud when he finds that his son, who has left him because his fellow naval students have pointed out his father's wartime speculation, is on the torpedoed vessel. There is a happy ending tagged on, but essentially, the effectiveness of the story is there.

DECEMBER 15th

In its usual subtle but nonetheless effective way, *Prensa* this morning pushes a long pin into the generally prevalent Argentine idea that

a highly favorable trade balance means measureless prosperity. The first ten months of '43 shows a favorable balance of 976,272,000 pesos compared with balances (also favorable) of 392 million and 200 million in the same period of '42 and '41. But imports, *Prensa* points out, have fallen to the lowest level registered in the last fifty years, and this cannot be passed off as due to lack of purchasing power. "The Argentine stock of gold and currency is today higher than anybody believed possible. Some of this has been absorbed by the rise in prices and some partly sterilized by the smaller movement of banking deposits." But all this, *Prensa* warns, means that while money is abundant, there is an ever-increasing lack of a great number of commodities and the general level of living conditions "grows worse instead of better. The cost of living rises, industry suffers for lack of raw materials and the scarcity of fuel and the public services grow less efficient every day. Those protectionists who consider that the end and aim of foreign trade is the greatest possible exportation, have ample material for meditation on the advantages they attribute to this system. A true appreciation of commercial balances should be made by taking into account the economic function of importation and nothing else."

Prensa's arguments are sound, but I don't think they've yet reached many people. Living expenses here have probably risen less than in any other South American Republic and so, in the obvious way, most Argentines give no thought to the possibility that if their country continues to sell far more abroad than it buys, it will eventually head for a fall. Argentina wants machinery and manufactured goods; is coasting along now on machinery that is gradually wearing out. This year is likely to finish with a favorable balance of payments—not trade—of about one thousand million pesos. Next year may show a somewhat smaller figure. Argentina will have to find something to do with that money. Withdrawal of foreign indebtedness is one line. Nationalizing of the railways is a second. Still another is active road construction so far as it can be done with local materials. These are big schemes but they call for far-reaching steps and to date such steps don't seem very much in evidence.

All those early June promises of no more pompous ceremonies, fancy parties or full-dress receptions, so sincere-sounding in the days when the revolution was new, must have gone up in a cloud of champagne bubbles last night. The Moriñigo farewell affair was given in the Presidential summer mansion out in suburban Olivos, and it seemed that everybody and his uncle were invited. Maybe the uncles weren't, but they showed up anyway—Army officers who hadn't had a bid for such a fancy fracas since they were born, took the notation "*Capitan y Senora*" on the invitation to mean everybody in the *familia* who had a boiled shirt or a long dress. The mansion and its lovely grounds were as packed and floodlit as Playa Grande in Mar del Plata, while the Cabinet, the diplomats, the invited and *their* invitees consumed hundreds of magnums of Argentine champagne and the very welcome hot bouillon, provided when the weather, stiflingly hot during the day, chose to turn chilly late in the evening. Meanwhile they applauded another *coronel* for a change—Vassily de Basil's original Ballet Russe.

The new Argentine-Paraguayan Trade Treaty was formally ratified yesterday. Paraguay gets a free zone in the ports of Buenos Aires and Rosario, first step toward a Customs Union between the two countries. Other clauses of the Treaty cover postal, telegraph and wireless communications between both countries, whereby both undertake to bring their legislation into line and establish measures for facilitating trade. In his treaty speech, Foreign Minister Gilbert made only slight reference to the one point which is the basic question in all this great fuss: Argentina's desire to develop her own Latin-American bloc by linking herself as closely as possible with other Good Neighbor countries. He denied Argentina had any desire to dominate, but admitted: "Our ambition is to work for the benefit of the whole Continent, for all classes. This is the path of peace and prosperity."

(Later)

The Pan-American Union governing board up in Washington has formally proposed to the twenty-one American Republics the con-

vocation of an Inter-American conference in Washington in September of '44 to consider post-war problems. Cordell Hull is to be chairman and secretary and will formally invite the nations if the proposal meets with the approval of the Governments of this hemisphere. Approval is expected to be a mere routine, but the question of what's going to be done about Argentina in the democratic post-war world has no easy solution. The question is being asked with increasing frequency throughout Latin America these days. While Argentina naturally figures as a member of the Pan-American Union, she has been banned so far from all of the important post-war meetings of the United Nations in which such powerful warring rivals as Brazil, Mexico and Cuba have participated. In many of these countries, people are saying that her growingly fascist Government, her benevolence toward Axis activities and her failure to do her share in continental defense, means that she is not entitled to the same standing and benefits after the war as those who have done a job in helping wipe out totalitarianism.

Argentina's pro-democratic papers and the great majority of her people certainly want their country to participate. In the last week or so, the papers have again been filled with articles about post-war possibilities. The only group that has done any post-war talking here has been the Union Industrial Argentina, which has named a commission of economic affairs as part of a prominent congress of producers. Head is José Maria Bustillo. This group has confined itself mainly to studying how to get capital to develop production, new methods of organizing production and planning for the co-ordination of economic activities. Still it is not an official body and Argentina's military refuse to even think about what's ahead, except to repeatedly state that Argentina will have her place and, by inference, insist that no one will be able to deprive her of what's truly hers.

DECEMBER 17th

This may be the first step toward formation of a real Axis-style State Party. Half a million Federal, provincial and municipal civil-service

employees today were deprived of the right to belong to political parties or engage in any political activity. To compensate for this loss of one of their most vital rights as citizens, they are handed promises of better working conditions and social benefits.

"Any servant of the State who fulfills his duties with efficiency, interest and patriotism, is entitled to a just reward for his services, security in his position and the opportunity to make a career," Ramírez said at a civil-service banquet in the big Les Ambassadeurs hall last night. "Two great evils have always prevailed: instability of employment and failure to recognize ability. This has resulted, only too frequently, in men being promoted not for their knowledge or experience, but because they had known how to support the right political party. When we took over, following the revolution, a spirit of unrest, disillusion and dissatisfaction reigned among the civil servants." To answer this, Ramírez announced, a new decree had been drawn up, this one with eighty-six articles to "give a new rhythm to the nation's life." Its nationalistic character only becomes apparent when you get into it. Future civil-service candidates must be native-born or naturalized at least ten years. Heretofore, Argentine nationality without qualification has been the only requirement. Also established are systems for competitive examinations, social welfare, the right to demand a hearing in the event that personal or moral interests are affected by measures taken by superiors, appeal and the installation of a regular system for promotions. All employees must become members of the officially recognized mutual societies.

Talking to some civil-service employees so far produces a mixed picture. Public service here, while vastly superior to that in many other Latin countries, has always been subject to the evils which Ramírez pointed out. However, the new decree, while it may sound well on the surface, is obviously intended, they feel, mainly to win civil-service employees over to the new regime by promising rights and privileges (the right to a hearing, for example) which it denies ordinary citizens or workers in other fields. (All those suspected communists, for example: Would a Federal employee charged with being a communist get a hearing?) The obligatory membership in mutual-aid groups also sounds good until you remember that they are strictly controlled, dominated by the military and give the

workers little or no chance to assert their claims. The order forbidding any participation in political parties also has its good and bad features. The system of kickbacks to the political parties similar to that used in many cities in the States, has always been a source of difficulty. Nobody liked the graft, except, possibly, the *politicos*. Yet, without these funds, political parties, already wobbly, will probably go down for the count, if, in fact, officialdom has not already decided to close them.

Another point, and one that makes the skeptical wonder about the new decree: What guarantee is there that some new Government coming into power won't immediately abolish these rules? They recall that when Uriburu's military coup took over, it also called for the establishment of a civil service free from politics. A similar scheme outlining salaries and conditions of employment was worked up but it faded away. Governments which have abolished Congress and most aspects of the Constitution, which have arbitrarily knocked out all kinds of measures adopted by previous Administrations, aren't too much to be trusted with lavish promises like these, especially when unrevealed motives are so easily spied.

DECEMBER 18th

The campaign against liberal, leftist and pro-democratic organizations advances another step today. Four Spanish Republican newspapers have been closed, and the Teatro del Pueblo (People's Theater) an internationally-famed organization somewhat like Manhattan's Group Theatre, has been intervened. The Spanish papers which had a fairly large circulation both among refugee Republicans and Loyalist sympathizers, have been shuttered for being "disrespectful" to the head of a foreign country, meaning Franco. Official reason for closing the Teatro del Pueblo was that it failed to observe certain municipal regulations. The group, headed by Leonidas Barletta, used an old theater property owned by the municipality of Buenos Aires, but otherwise was strictly independent. It refused any subsidies from State or private interests, and was always self-supporting. In the last ten years it has gained world-wide attention for its

presentation of United States, European and other famed theatrical works by writers ranging all the way from Eugene O'Neill to Bernard Shaw.

Under the new decree, the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and Morals receives possession, and a new director, Fausto de Tezanos Pinto, takes charge. Although no specific order is made against United States or European works, the concentration on nationalism is definite. There is to be a contest for the type of plays the theater is to produce. This emphasizes that "works are to be inspired by Argentine themes or exalting national virtues." Others are also to dwell on Argentine history. The step is just the first in what may be eventually the nationalization of all theaters, for the new Secretariat of Press and Information is empowered to "assist" theater production along "uplifting" lines.

The Radicals have been turned down in their request for a party convention. When they applied for permission to *Coronel* Ramírez, Buenos Aires Chief of Police, they were told: "Put your petition in writing." The petition was duly made and no more information was forthcoming, despite repeated requests, until yesterday when the Vice-President of the party, Dr. José C. Susa, received a note saying that after careful consideration, it was regretted that the necessary O.K. could not be granted "due to the fact that it represented a political activity inconvenient at the present moment." The authorities, I understand, are cooking up something special for the political parties.

It may be that people are getting too used to what has been happening here. An important step today, possibly as important as any yet taken, but it rates only a few paragraphs on the inside pages. The Supreme Court, which somehow has been allowed to continue operations, mainly to rubber-stamp the military confirmed a decision taken by the Federal Court up in Mendoza that the right of habeas corpus is no longer in effect in Argentina. This is based on the state of seige first imposed by Castillo exactly two years ago this month and amplified and improved by the new regime. The test case was brought by the wife of José Federico Garcia. He was arrested and interned in a concentration camp down in cold, miserable Neuquen. No reason was ever given except that he

violated the state of seige. He never had a trial, no further charges have ever been placed against him and he is but one of many thousands. The Supreme Court's decision on his case means that none of these political prisoners can have any hope of freedom until the regime decides to relent, or gets thrown out. The Supreme Court finds a whole series of legal reasons for taking its stand, most of them hinging on the fact that under the state of seige the Constitution is not effective.

How many are held down in Neuquen and in Rio Gallegos no one knows. The few letters smuggled out tell horrible tales; tales of prisoners being kept standing naked while their clothes are taken away and thin prison garments given them. The weather down there has been particularly bad, facilities especially inadequate. Prisoners get little to read, only the barest medical attention and many have become ill with pneumonia. Few know where to turn or what they can do, for those arrested aren't people who have friends in high places. Undergoing particularly rough treatment, I understand, is Benito Marianetti, a one-time Senator from Mendoza and founder of the Socialist Workers Party who was co-director of the communist daily, *La Hora*.

British and American firms which have vast interests running into millions here are worried about the creation of a commission to look into the question of nationalization of Argentina's American-owned Unión Telefonica. *Pampero*, which always manages to have the inside of what the regime is thinking, says that the nationalization of phones is the first step in a Government program to nationalize all foreign-owned public utilities. These include telephone, cable and wireless lines, the radio and railways, the dockyards, gas companies and waterworks, most established by foreign interests and many still operated by United States and British companies. The telephone-probing commission was named by Interior Minister Perlinger, who instructed the Postmaster General to submit a report within three months. The telephone company, a subsidiary of International T.&T. has been having a long series of difficulties since Ramírez became President.

Earlier this month, Perlinger issued a decree regulating the use and operation of private telephone lines, giving the Government the right to expropriate them and all equipment at any time. Last

month the Finance Ministry decreed the Union Telefonica must pay a special tax of 100 pesos for each office in the Province of Buenos Aires, where the nation's phone services are concentrated. The payment, furthermore, was to be retroactive for ten years. The company was also ordered to pay a special tax for ads carried in its phone directory. *Pampero*, with its usual good explanation for any and all decrees, said Argentina's public utilities were in the hand of "foreign capitalists and should be taken over lock, stock and dial. Control of our telephones is in New York," says *Pampero*, forgetting the millions in cash, equipment, training and personnel that have been invested. Some public-utility men tell me that there is a basis for the argument that public utilities should be nationalized, but they insist that this regime has no intention of doing any such thing fairly and honorably. Buying out the phone companies, the railways and the water and power concerns, should, they say, be a matter for round-table discussion, for the appointment of mixed commissions to establish prices and conditions and for harmonious settlement. Outright nationalization that smacks of the Hitler and Mussolini pattern is another matter.

United States investments in Argentina, according to the latest figures, come to \$310,595,391 out of a total of \$2,494,000,000 for all Latin America. Argentina has by no means the largest American investment. Cuba is first with \$614,406,658 and Brazil second with \$337,242,028.

An especially bitter anti-Semitic editorial in *Cabildo* this morning. It reveals for the first time that the Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas apparently in the very mildest manner, had gone to the Interior Ministry and asked if some steps could be taken to curb some of the increasing anti-Semitic attacks. *Cabildo*, under a headline titled "Audacity and Temerity" demands to know: "What right have these people to ask for special favors? This is the Jewish danger. We need only this to justify those who are called anti-Semites for convenience of language. If for nothing else, these demands made by the Jews entitled them to the kind of treatment we hope they will receive." It's a typical Nazi method of twisting every fact to its own purposes. The Asociaciones' request was made as a result of an incident in the interior where a Jewish theater company presenting a play was

raided by nationalist ruffians, the theater damaged by tar and stench bombs and the show broken up.

DECEMBER 20th

A military coup in Bolivia. And now I know what it must have been like in New York back on June 4th when the Army sent Castillo hopping down the gangplank on the minesweeper *Drummond*. I got the tip around mid-day; immediately started chasing around to all my Bolivian friends to try to get some kind of explanation of what it meant and who was responsible. The first few hours were difficult, just as I later learned they were difficult for the correspondents trying to interpret the Argentine coup in the States last June. But this time, more people were warned and more of them had an idea of what was up. As the names of the leaders became known, the story took shape. By seven o'clock, when I started to write, we were definitely sure that the same kind of young fanatical Army clique had been responsible in Bolivia as here, only in Bolivia they were majors instead of colonels. The local censorship was especially strict in keeping any correspondents from making odious comparisons between June 4th in Buenos Aires and December 20th in La Paz.

As the picture looks now, the revolt of the majors appears to have had inspiration, if not direct support, from Buenos Aires, and to have stemmed as much from internal causes, including the bitter absentee landlord labor troubles than direct Axis pressure which, in Bolivia, has been considerable. That does not mean that the Axis is not involved, but, as in Argentina's case, it does indicate that action is roundabout. "Love of country" is given as the chief reason for the coup in a radio address by Major Villaroel who has been named President of the new Government. But it is noteworthy that while the cables from La Paz have been complete so far as the accounts for the fighting and the success of the revolutionists are concerned, little has been allowed to come out regarding the basic purposes and plans for the new regime. The impression we have here is that nationalist elements stirred up by the Axis pressure, have been

insisting that Bolivia wasn't getting her full share of all she should get out of the tin she's been selling to the United States and Britain. Augusto Céspedes, secretary general of the revolutionary group which has the title of *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, has, for example, been constantly attacking the government of President Peñaranda in his long-blacklisted newspaper, *La Calle*, which was suspended last week. Victor Paz Estensoro, who has been named Minister of Finance in the new Cabinet and who is said to be the real leader of the revolutionary Government, is a young intellectual, strongly nationalist, who has repeatedly claimed Peñaranda was not keeping Bolivian interests first and "foreign interests (mainly *norteamericano*) second." As in Argentina, the movement so far does not seem to be a people's revolution, even though the Bolivian people have plenty about which to complain.

In the makeup of the new Villaroel Cabinet, there are fewer Army men than here—three majors and seven civilians. Most of the latter, like the first Argentine coup Cabinet, are known for their authoritarian nationalist line and for their insistence and determination to reshape their mountain-top, landlocked country along more authoritarian patterns. The financial crisis which developed during and immediately following the arbitrated settlement of the long war with Paraguay has been the start of Bolivia's recent troubles. David Toro came into power in 1935 and, two years later, abandoned by the liberals, the Army forced him to resign. *Coronel* German Busch, who previously staged a coup, stepped back into the Presidency, only to commit suicide two years later. Peñaranda's choice was a compromise between extreme Army elements and a powerful civilian group, and observers feel that today's coup indicates more than anything that he was unable to keep both satisfied.

DECEMBER 21st

Lip service to democracy, continued support of the United Nations' war effort—but a stronger, more and more totalitarian, militaristic control of every phase of internal affairs. That is what the Latin-American observers I have canvassed see in Bolivia's brief but

bloody coup of yesterday morning. In inspiration, pattern and direction, the ouster of President General Enrique Peñaranda by the group of Army majors and members of the fanatical Nationalist Revolutionary Party follows almost exactly the June 4th deposition of Castillo. But any comparisons are still strictly forbidden here. Although Peñaranda, whose term was to end in a year, was an Army man, his situation was in many ways similar to that of Castillo's, for he was a compromise choice, trying to hold liberal and ultra-conservative authoritarian-minded elements together, and satisfying neither. I have talked to a good many people who know Latin America from inside and way back, men not given to rash predictions, and they feel that the same kind of situations existent in other Latin-American Republics may soon set off a string of other fire-cracker coups, giving this continent even more military dictatorships than it now has. These Latin Army cliques, many of them directly inspired by Nazi-paid nationalists, do not take much urging to convince themselves that democracy—still far from realization in most places south of the border—is not working, or at least not working the way they meant it to.

As in Argentina's and Bolivia's cases, these groups decided it is necessary to take things into their own hands. What's more, the signs I have been able to total up definitely show that these nationalist movements, despite their constant shrilling of "independence" and "freedom from interference," are definitely linked. Paz Estensoro, leader of the Bolivian movement, was here just a month after the June coup. It wasn't the first time this bespectacled thirty-six-year-old administrative lawyer had met the GOU or the Argentine nationalists, but this time he was out to get other information on how the military had achieved its ends, and especially what help, moral more than physical, he and his followers might expect from Buenos Aires. *Pampero* gave a banquet in his honor.

Yesterday's movement, Latin diplomats feel, will probably start off as did Argentina's. First steps will be to show that the new Government is out "to get things done." They will cite the fact that they are giving the United Nations more aid, getting Bolivia a higher share for Bolivia's tin and copper, securing more Lend-Lease from Washington. This, as in Argentina, will be accompanied by a great show of cleaning-up (to use the words of the Bolivian

Military declaration itself) "the mine-owning exploiters, their associates and their representatives in Government and Parliament." Efforts will be made to show these "exploiters" hindered aid to the United Nations. And, as in Argentina, the military, in order to prove its progress, will shut up the opposition, gag and bind the press as did Castillo and Peñaranda; then it will set up a dictatorship far exceeding the previous Administrations. And the Latin-American fascists who constantly seek to stir up regimes of this kind, have added another stumbling block to the advancement of democracy in our own hemisphere.

Major Villaroel has been giving out interviews insisting his Government will be essentially democratic, that it will govern strictly in accordance with the country's laws and national Constitution. Furthermore, he says, solidarity with the United Nations and sister American Republics will be maintained and international treaties—Bolivia's slow-moving Congress ratified Peñaranda's six-month-old war declaration only a few weeks ago—will be respected. Official explanation for the coup sounds just like that which the Argentine military gave out in the first days. "The political change has been magnificently received . . . The triumphant revolution tends to restore Constitutional guarantees and affirms a true and ample democracy, without special privileges or injustices, seeking only the economic and social improvement of the people."

So far the only news that comes out of Bolivia is strictly controlled. Realizing the eyes of the world are on them, the Bolivian leaders say that Peñaranda's Government was "constantly illegal, criminal in its deception of public faith, its squandering of Federal funds and complete abandonment of Bolivia's vital interests." It all sounds great. But *Cabildo's* praise this morning gives the tip-off once more. "Bolivia is our natural ally," says *Cabildo*. "The Army has done its duty."

Falangist propagandists are out on a new drive to hinder the Republics of this hemisphere from recognizing the new Spanish Republican Committee of Liberation formed this week in Mexico City. The refugee congress whose activities have been followed with tremendous interest everywhere south of the border, has not, so far as is known here, asked for recognition by any American Republic.

But the fury with which it is being attacked by the Francophile leaders, organizations, newspapers and radio stations, as illegal, immoral and an insult to the "mother country" Spain plainly indicates Madrid's fear that the recognition bid will be made and possibly accepted by at least some hemisphere Republics. Mexico, which not only permitted the meeting but which has allowed the entrance of thousands of Spanish anti-fascist refugees denied admittance elsewhere, does not maintain diplomatic relations with Franco. Falangist rags have not only been hitting at Mexico's permitting the meeting but, trying another track, have spread stories hinting at possible resumption of relations between Mexico City and Madrid which would help kill off the Republican effort. Feeling locally is that Washington has the key to the situation. While there is no great hope of official United States recognition of the Spanish Republican Committee, pro-democratic people here believe that should Roosevelt and Hull make some gesture toward Republican leader Diego Martinez Barrio, it would raise the hopes of millions of anti-Francoites in the Americas and Spain. These people, citing the promises of the Atlantic Charter and the Teheran reunion, see in the case of the Spanish Republican Government a real test of the United Nations' pledges.

DECEMBER 22nd (*Montevideo*)

Good news from Washington. Secretary of State Hull makes it plain that the United States wants to know whether any outside influence unfriendly to the United Nations' cause had any part in the Bolivian revolution, before recognition is granted the new regime. "It must never be forgotten," he says, "that the hemisphere is subject to a sinister and subversive attack by the Axis, assisted by elements from within the hemisphere itself." This statement is taken here as a solemn warning to the entire world that the United States, while fighting in the world struggle on many fronts, is still determined to avoid any possibility of letting the Axis get a direct or indirect foothold in this continent. But so far as we can see, that is the public reaction only, not that of the Argentine Government.

Uruguayan Vice-President, Dr. Alberto Guani, is even more specific than Hull. "Recognition of the new Government," he told me, "should be the subject of previous consultation among the nations forming the Pan-American Union." While refusing to make any reference to the specific case of Bolivia, he explains that, in his opinion, the moment has arrived when the countries of this hemisphere must act collectively. "Things have changed," he added. "Pan-American obligations now impose rights and duties on those who have contracted them, duties which affect the defense of the continent and harmony among the nations themselves. The logical thing would be that each American country—this without any loss of sovereignty—place its problem for study before our society of American Nations. We still have to fight and continue fighting against the aggressor nations; this must not be forgotten."

Talk among diplomats here is that despite the Axis influence there is little likelihood Bolivia will rescind its declaration of war against the Axis. What is likely to occur is a series of harassing tactics against foreign capital investments, the revival of boundary disputes with neighbors, especially Chile, which bars her from a coveted outlet to the Pacific and the kind of trouble-making that makes the whole Pan-American set-up as firm as a plate of Jell-O.

Word comes from Chile that General Peñaranda has denied he gave his resignation, as claimed by La Paz. He insists that, contrary to revolutionary claims, many in the Bolivian Army are with him, not with the boys who rushed him out. Local news is almost forgotten in the concentration of interest on Bolivia. People here in Uruguay watch each new edition of the papers, and get the kind of news denied Argentines by the censors. The press services in Argentina are finding that they can give the papers all the stories passed by the La Paz censors, but the Washington and London unfavorable-reaction stories, which are full of nasty little questions about how does Argentina figure in this, are put right on the dead spike of the telegram-covered news desk. All are printed here, however.

There may be an important Argentine story in the unexpected announcement today that the resignations of military Interventors in four provinces, presented several weeks ago, had suddenly been accepted. General Armando Verdaguer, who has been running the

big important province of Buenos Aires, stated that the National Government had decided to relieve him of his post, but the others, General Luis E. Villanueva of Mendoza, and Captain Jorge Godoy, of San Juan, keep mum. *Coronel* Aritobulo Vargas Belmonte has been appointed to the Mendoza post, but no other replacements are revealed.

DECEMBER 23rd (*Montevideo*)

From diplomatic sources here I learned earlier today that the American Republics have already begun exchanging information on the question of recognition of the new Bolivian regime. Huddles have been going on almost round-the-clock. There is much interest locally in Enrique Lozada, who has been up in Washington working for the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, who now announces he is to be the confidential agent in Washington for the new regime, apparently with the idea of convincing the Yankees that Paz Estensoro and his crowd are O.K. It now begins to appear that the new Bolivian regime is already raising the anti-Semitic question in the good old *Mein-Kampf* tradition. There have been an increasing number of Jewish refugees up in Bolivia—possibly as many as 40,000—and their presence hasn't exactly gone down well, particularly with the nationalists. While some were admitted as agriculturists, most of them have congregated in the cities, particularly La Paz. Bolivia's white population is only about 15 percent of its four million inhabitants, and the refugees have, not unnaturally, been very noticeable. They have started all kinds of new businesses, taken over the running of the Sucre Palace Hotel—no Waldorf but the best up there—and furnished all sorts of competition to many Bolivian enterprises. Some people who came down from La Paz recently tell me that, by and large, this has been an excellent thing for the country, for Bolivia lacks the stimulation of business competition, and needed new processes, arts and crafts.

Months and months ago they realized resentment was growing, spurred on by the very group which today holds power. On the

night of the coup, many Jewish-owned shops were damaged, and the Sucre Palace, as well as our own Embassy, were stoned. Officially, the Bolivian Government says nothing of this, admitting only that "some extremist elements got out of control" but are now well in hand. It has apparently realized that measures such as these will give a black eye that all the Argentine beef in the world won't relieve, and everything is being done to hush-hush and keep it out of sight.

A further explanation from Chief of Police, Colonel Emilio Ramírez, about the turning down of the request, for a Radical Party convention. Ramírez regrets he "cannot accede, seeing that it is the aim of my superiors to avoid any activity tending to create unrest and perturb in any way whatsoever the fulfillment of the vast program the Government has under study, one of the principal points of which is the union of all Argentines under a common principle, namely the material and moral aggrandizement of our country." Does this mean a State Party is coming sooner than we expected?

Franco's "dissolution" of the Falange militia, the freeing of political prisoners and other steps taken several days ago are likely to increase Falangist espionage and fifth columnism in Latin America, rather than anything else. The new moves are regarded by Latin America—which knows and follows Spanish developments far more closely than the United States—as part of a steadily increasing Franco retrenchment program designed to give the *Caudillo* a way out by appeasing the United Nations. The Falangist press is hailing the stories of the dissolution and the other steps as proving Franco's heart has always been in the right place and that Spain's only interest is in preserving her neutrality and leading her own life. The recent bullying attacks on the United States and British consulates in Spain are dismissed as "unimportant" incidents "already condemned."

The dissolution decree flung at the Falange militia by Franco is as fraudulent as the *Caudillo's* alleged amnesties for Republican political prisoners. Actually, it was a move designed to strengthen the Falangist grip on the Spanish Army. The militia, ostensibly dissolved as an entity, was incorporated bodily into the Regular

Army, with the militia officers retaining their same ranks after the shift. In other words, the move merely packs the regular Spanish Army with fanatical Falangist officers and non-coms.

At the same time, the new Spanish budget for the coming fiscal year contains, I learned today from A.C., a boost in the State appropriation for the Falange. Last year's appropriation was 154,000,000 pesetas. This has been jumped to 475,000,000 pesetas (\$47,500,000)—just three times as much. And yet Franco's apologists here and in the States are yipping that the Falange is being junked in Spain! The worst of it is that at least half of the Falange budget is for work in Latin America.

DECEMBER 24th

Control of unions gets stronger. Colonel Perón has ordered the centralization in one department of all matters relating to labor in the Northern provinces, where trouble has been brewing among the poorly paid menial laborers. Conditions up there, especially in the *quebracho* districts are almost beyond belief. Wage scales are barely enough to support life. Company stores get back all the pitiful *jornales* and large prices—far higher than in Buenos Aires—make good living impossible; the workers are practically slaves.

The Federal Interventor of the Railway Workers' Union, known as La Fraternidad, has decided to allow them to affiliate with the central A.F.L.-like Confederacion General del Trabajo with the understanding that the latter body "abstain from all political, ideological or related activities." The C.G.T. is already well under control and all the affiliation will do is to give the military one less headache to watch. Underneath this, there appears to be a drive to unionize all workers in the country—unionize, that is, in Government-controlled *sindicatos*. To keep them happy, Perón disclosed that he is considering a plan under which all railway men will be granted annual holidays with pay, a privilege they now lack. The City Transport Corporation in Buenos Aires also announced Christmas bonuses of two days' wages to all workers earning up to 250 pesos (\$60.00) a month. It is amazing how many families here manage to live, and live fairly well, on such salaries.

The University of Tucumán has been intervened. No details given, but trouble has long been bubbling up there.

The Bolivian situation is still open. Confidential Agent Lozada up in Washington denies there's any anti-Semitism in Bolivia, asserts the movement had no tie-up with the Nazis and promises to resign if his cable to the Government demanding complete repudiation of any racist doctrine is not met. The Montevideo Committee has signed a note to all the American Republics which have declared war or broken relations with the Axis, recommending no recognition before consultation. Argentina, of course, is omitted, which causes plenty of non-printable comment.

DECEMBER 25th

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas too and only a Christmas tree to bring back that wish-I-was-home feeling. No matter how many years go by, it never does seem right to discover that Christmas is sun-tan and ocean-dip weather. My present to the senora was the news that we're going back home, perhaps within the next month. It is an abundant life here in Buenos Aires, but hardly a full one. Each day the restrictions get stronger, the limits on what can be said or done, more severe. If I can get the office to say "yes," we'll be able to take the Clipper north and wave to that little old lady down in Manhattan Bay once more. The senora is all excited. Visitors from the States told us that Calle Florida shops boast of silk stockings, smart gowns and fancy accessories that put New York's Fifth Avenue to shame. We dine them at the Plaza, they roll their eyes heavenward and say: "Twenty-One and the Colony were never like this." We take them out in free-cruising taxis, and there's no one to share the ride. But just the same, we've seen what's been happening underneath, and we want to go back to the States and add a voice, possibly just a small one, but a voice nevertheless, so that the folks up there can have a little more of a first-hand picture of what goes on down here. Sometimes we think we're losing touch with things. What the Government is doing here no longer shocks and stuns as it used to, and that's a bad sign.

Arrests of alleged communists, especially up in the Province of Cordoba, have been so numerous that the Central Department of the Radical Party there has written to the Federal Interventor, Admiral Scasso, pleading that he take note that they are neither communists, fascists or Nazis. Citing their long and honorable traditions, explaining that they were created to fight for an effective democracy, for administrative decency and official action, they say that they have always complied strictly with these principles, particularly in provincial Government affairs. Their province (as most Argentines agree) has been one of the best run in the country. Nevertheless, dozens of members of the party have been arrested, accused of being communists. I am afraid the plea will fall on deaf ears. Admiral Scasso has been one of the most notorious of the pro-fascists in the Navy, which probably accounts for the excessive number of arrests in Cordoba. Resistance to the new regime has been stronger up there than possibly in any other place in the country, and the GOU, which has an extensive under-cover service in the province, appears determined to wipe it out once and for all.

Capitan Ricardo Vago, Minister of Public Works, has resigned. No reason given. This naval officer has always been a special friend of the United States and was one of the only pro-allied men in Ramírez' Cabinet. Vice-Admiral Sueyro, who keeps out of the limelight in his Navy Ministry, will take over Public Works, together with his own portfolio, for the time being.

DECEMBER 26th

Military coups in at least half a dozen Latin-American Republics are certain to come, perhaps within six months, perhaps within a year, unless some kind of joint action is taken by all the Republics of the Americas to refuse recognition to Bolivia's new militaristic regime, until its democratic motivation and aims are proven genuine beyond any reasonable doubt. That's the feeling I get from experienced observers of every kind here. Small groups of authoritarian-minded Army officials, many of them Nazi-inspired and working with nationalists, Falangists and ultra-reactionary elements

within Latin America's powerful Church, have been planning movements in Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Colombia and elsewhere, encouraged by the quick recognition granted the Ramírez Government after its take-over. And the fine hand of the Argentine military and that of Axis agents operating from Buenos Aires is more and more plainly evident behind the scheming. These movements are not revolutions as *Norteamericanos* constantly and mistakenly call them. I keep emphasizing that fact in every bit of copy I write. The people don't figure in the planning or execution, and only indirectly in the purpose. The Argentine coup and that in Bolivia were staged by such minority cliques. The nationalist groups which supported them (in this case, Bolivia's *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario*, commonly called MNR) tried to give to the outside world, at least, the semblance of a popular uprising. Those who have been watching these developments tell me that the powder-keg situations throughout Latin America can only be forestalled by some Latin-American postponed-recognition plan as that proposed by Dr. Guani. For, without recognition of the other Good Neighbor Republics, no American regime is likely to last long. Here's the way the situation seems to stack up to me at this writing.

Peru: A military opposition group seems to be growing. President Manuel Prado, himself no lily-white character so far as democracy is concerned, has nevertheless been openly pro-United States, but he's interested mainly in his own control. The history of overthrows and coups in Peru, follows a familiar pattern. President José Prado y Barreda, while serving a second term that began in 1915, was driven from office on July 4, 1919. He was followed by Augusto Leguia y Salcedo, who ruled until he was tossed out in August, 1930. Leguia's period in office was marked by material progress, but at the same time an increasing class dissension, social turmoil and a more and more crushing burden of taxation. After Leguia's fall, General Sanchez Cerro assumed the Presidency. He lost it two years later when he was killed in a brief and abortive war with Colombia over the Amazon hamlet of Leticia. General Oscar Benavides followed to the Presidency, and was legally elected and Prado succeeded him in December, 1939.

Chile is another danger spot. Chile's principal trend has been toward a more liberal government, increased privileges for the

masses and better social conditions. But it has not all been peaceful and tranquil. There were bloodless revolutions in 1924 and 1925, but in 1932 a military coup attempt was made that was marked by many deaths. Despite all the opposition efforts, however, Alessandri (Chile's more energetic Castillo) emerged the victor, and was succeeded in 1938 by Aguirre Cerda, known as "Don Tinto," for the rich red wine that came from his vineyards. Cerda was the first Chilean President to emerge from the ranks of the poor, and headed the only Popular Front Government in this hemisphere. He died on November 25, 1941. Three months later, on February 1, 1942, Juan Antonio Ríos was elected President, backed by more or less the same democratic combine which put Cerda into power. Chile's extreme poverty has helped develop one of the largest communist parties of any country in the hemisphere, but to counter this there has been brewing under cover an increasingly potent, ultra-reactionary group, determined to bring about a complete *volte-face*. This group has the support of many wealthy *Chilenos* and there's more than a mere suspicion that it has also had inspiration and help from Argentina's regime.

Ecuador: Has had fourteen Presidents in thirteen years. Carlos Arroyo del Río elected in 1940, has been able to hold on to the saddle, despite several revolutionary uprisings, but that doesn't mean that his opposition isn't active.

Uruguay: One of the most liberal of Latin-American Republics, Uruguay, nevertheless, has been subject to strong nationalist pressure, and there have been a number of coup attempts. Gabriel Terra, named President in 1931, following a coup, declared a new Constitution three years later, increased the size of the Cabinet and made the Government over along more Parliamentary lines. Terra's term was extended from 1935 to 1938, when his brother-in-law, General Alfredo Baldomir, succeeded him. The Nazis attempted to seize power in 1940, and the sudden arrival of a United States gunboat on a "courtesy call" helped frustrate the effort. But the opposition group, led by Luis Alberto Herrera, tried another movement in 1942. Elections had to be postponed but were eventually held, and it is a tribute to Uruguay's essential democracy that Herrera was allowed to be candidate and was fairly defeated at the polls by Juan José Amézcaga, who took office in March of this year.

There has always been strong Argentine pressure on Uruguay, but it has been gradually decreasing as Uruguay has lined herself more with the Pan-American cause, made new and binding treaties with Brazil and asserted her own independence. Uruguay's Army has always been small in proportion to her two million population, like Argentina's to her thirteen million, but nationalist influences, while driven under cover, are still strong. Possibilities of a coup attempt are very real. It is known that nationalist-Nazi-inspired forces have been secretly training in Uruguay, preparing for "Der Tag" and, despite the number of times they have been exposed, they still manage to spring up in new form.

Needless to say, throughout the hemisphere, agents of the Spanish Falange, operating through the Spanish diplomatic offices, are working day and night to force fascist revolts. Many of them, although Spanish or Latin American by birth, have received Gestapo training in special schools established by General von Faupel's Ibero-American Institute in Barcelona, Madrid and Bremen. The Emergency Committee in Montevideo keeps adding to its information on this international fifth column, but the lead for cracking down on the Nazi-Falange machine must come from Washington.

DECEMBER 27th

Colonel Ramírez is to get his Federal police. A decree has been signed by the President and the Cabinet creating a force which will have power over the entire country, deal with crime within the Federal jurisdiction, guard the security of persons and possessions in the nation, and also man the frontiers, this latter with the national Gendarmerie and Prefecture of Police. Closest to Colonel Ramírez' heart, however, is the provision that he will be responsible for internal order and for counter-espionage, and anti-sabotage measures. The decree, in effect, makes all State and Municipal police subservient to the new body, which, since it takes orders only from the Presidency, means that it is responsible to no one but Colonel R. himself. Practically nothing has been overlooked; entry of foreigners, roads, river and aerial navigation, tourist traffic, security of the

railroads and communications, power houses and fuel plants and even the white-slave traffic. Federal police, everyone admits, have long been necessary in Argentina, but this one looks like a super force designed as much to put down any possible opposition as to care for the country's security. While some of its sections are supposed to be patterned on the F.B.I., the big difference is that with habeas corpus and Constitutional rights abolished, there's no one to talk back when abuses occur, no courts to which appeal can be made and no other official bodies to check and control what the Federal police do.

General Juan Pistarini, no great pal of the democracies, has been appointed Minister of Public Works. He's believed to be a Gonzalez appointee, and conceivably will make sure that public spending, which the regime constantly increases despite promises of economy, gets into the right hands. He was Military Attaché in Germany at one time before World War I, later served on technical missions to Spain and subsequently became Director General of Engineers, Commander of the Army Second Division and Interventor in the Province of Buenos Aires.

DECEMBER 28th

Bolivia denies any anti-Semitic tendencies. "It would be absurd to imagine there could be a Government in Bolivia inspired by racial doctrines," says Major Villaroel. "That would lead us to deny the Indio-Mestizo make-up of our people to render homage to the alleged Aryans. What has been called anti-Semitism in Bolivia was simply the result of the sale of passports to certain refugees. Unfortunately, they entered the country as agriculturists and not even a half percent of their total fell in this class. This provoked a protest which cannot be qualified as anti-Jewish or racialism. Within the country nationals and foreigners, be they Jews or not, enjoy the same guarantees." All this may sound great, but I've been talking to people who have just come back from Bolivia and they say the anti-Semitic situation, despite all the denials, is even more serious than originally believed.

Mundo failed to arrive with the coffee and *medias lunas* this morning. Tonight the story of why Buenos Aires' top-circulation tabloid failed to appear, is all over town. Not only has *Mundo* been suspended for a day but thirty or forty other papers as well—all because of their brief, but apparently distasteful accounts of what at first seemed like a more or less routine Army duel. The extent of *Mundo's* mis-step on Army toes is so slight that it is hard to understand the suspension. The story, in brief, is this: General Armando Verdaguer, who recently stepped down as Military Intervenor of the Province of Buenos Aires, was challenged to a duel by Dr. Julio Moreno, whom the General some time ago tossed out from the Presidency of the Provincial Supreme Court for alleged irregularities. Dr. Moreno (not to be confused with the former Governor of the Province whose troubles fill up the pre-coup entries of this Diary) first took his dismissal without a yelp, but immediately following General Verdaguer's resignation he used a verbal flame-thrower to blast some of his hottest "now-I-can-tell-you-what-I-think" remarks at the General. Verdaguer immediately appointed a crew of seconds to challenge Moreno to a duel, selecting Army Colts as weapons. The fight was held, but it was a phony. The General shot into the air and Moreno fired over his opponent's head, a sign—by local custom—that the insulted parties couldn't be very serious. The papers were suspended, not for reporting this, but because they said that the Chief of Police at La Plata, where the duel was held, had received a telegram from the Presidential Secretariat, recommending all measures be taken to prevent the fight. The point seems to be that not only did the police fail to stop it but that the story that nobody really shot at anybody else was reported. Therefore the Presidential Secretariat was made to look silly all around. Another sidelight gives an insight as to how these things operate here. Under the military code, the Presidential office couldn't ask that the duel be called off, once the challenge had been made. Newsmen were told they could print the story that the request to stop the duel had been given, but after the papers came out, somebody changed his mind, and all the editors who had gone ahead in good faith suddenly found themselves on the suspended list. Net effect of all this has been that what would ordinarily have passed as just another one of those internal scraps, got international attention.

A coup try in Chile. And so soon that it's just a little bit suspicious. When, a few days ago, I noted in the journal that something might be popping in Latin America I didn't expect confirmation so quickly. According to the official announcement from Santiago, "certain individuals of recognized anti-democratic ideology, in union with foreign elements resident in Chile," were developing "a campaign of seditious character tending to perturb public tranquillity and undermine the stability of fundamental Chilean institutions. The elements in question are making use of propaganda on the basis of rumors which lack all foundation, attempting to get public opinion to believe that a sector of the armed forces of Chile is disposed to support the anti-patriotic project. The Government categorically rejects that slanderous imputation, and declares that the country is ready immediately to adopt the necessary measures to energetically punish the responsible parties. It will expel from the territory all foreigners who show themselves unworthy of the hospitality afforded them and will place at the disposal of Chilean justice the remaining individuals who have made themselves deserving of severe sanction."

Impressions here are these: Something is brewing in Chile, but the Government hasn't yet put its finger on it. However, announcing that it has discovered a plot gives it a chance to take certain additional measures and also may help scare off the plotters. The "mysterious foreign elements" are believed to be Argentine, although Chile naturally points no fingers across the Andes. Whatever is going on in Santiago, this won't be the last of it.

From Washington, Cordell Hull confirms that the United States will not recognize any new Government in this hemisphere "instituted by force" without prior consultation with the other American Republics. Bolivia's Confidential Agent beams public approval and adds that the new regime has announced in advance that it will accept the decisions taken by the Emergency Committee in Montevideo. Argentina, Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Ibarra Garcia chimes in, has not yet made up its mind. No comment on the fact that it was not invited to participate in the Inter-American discussions. Argentines are getting such a limited story of the

Bolivian situation—which is none too clear to anybody—that they can hardly dope out answers to any of the questions on their minds. They know that their opinion will not make any difference to the local *militares*, but they would like to know if their country had any part in it. Not unnaturally, many of them dismiss the suggestion—which they've learned of even though nothing about it has been printed here—as fantastic. The way officialdom is trying to get the story played is that the poor working people of Bolivia have finally revolted against the all-powerful absentee tin landlords, and that the United States, by withholding recognition, is seeking to save the day for the capitalist exploiters. This isn't carried on with any definite announcements, of course, but by trimming down what the papers can print in the way of impartial comment and spoon-feeding certain stories into the right ears, the regime succeeds in another anti-United States stab.

DECEMBER 30th

People here are beginning to spot the shaping up of a broad change in the United States policy toward Latin America. The longer recognition of Bolivia is delayed, the better the whole situation is likely to be for effective democracy in Latin America. If democracy in every Republic becomes the concern of all Republics, Pan-Americanism will have become far closer to reality. In recent years our policy toward Latin America has been motivated in no small measure by the fear of being accused of using the big stick. United States reaction to our old practices in Cuba and Central America was such that we have practically leaned over backward to prevent anyone accusing us of interference. And all this time the Nazis have been active, helping themselves under the guise of nationalism to exert their own pressure. This has permitted the growth of many essentially undemocratic regimes, flowery in their praise of democracy, but under the surface as undemocratic as the corporate states of Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. What may be developing now, and it's certainly to be hoped for, is a stronger inter-American spirit, in which all the American Republics combine. If it becomes a true inter-American affair, then the ghost of imperialist *Tio Sam* may be

eventually exorcised. It will take a lot of doing. The centering of inter-American deliberations on the Bolivian situation in Montevideo is one excellent sign, for it will help allay that feeling about inter-American affairs being dictated in Washington. Secretary Hull at his press conference yesterday repeatedly passed the buck to Senor Guani, as chairman of the committee which sent out the consultative proposal. No one down here has anything but the greatest respect for Hull, but the more Latin-American statesmen—especially statesmen of the caliber of Guani—who take a lead in inter-American affairs, the better it will be for our hemisphere-wide policy. Guani is in a particularly fortunate situation for this job, for he has aroused comparatively few jealousies among other Latin-American *politicos* and Uruguay's standing is extremely good. As a small country she's less subject to covetous green eyes.

Definite facts about the Chilean situation are still hard to get. The Interior Ministry over there, we understand, has revealed that no more than forty foreigners are involved in the discovered coup plan and their records are being studied. Santiago papers reaching here stress the fact that the Chilean Army's watchful attitude precluded any attempt to disturb the public order. *El Mercurio* calls on the Rios Government to give more details and asks whether the conspiracy is against the present Government, or aims at disturbing Chile's collaboration with the United Nations. By and large, Chilean public opinion seems to be with Rios. Also from Santiago today is a denial that Chile has already agreed to recognize the new Bolivian regime. Peru makes the same denial but La Paz thinks both Chile and Paraguay will give her the nod soon. Nothing said here about Argentina, but it also looks as if this country will come across, regardless of what the others do.

DECEMBER 31st

Last day of the year, but no rest for the weary.

Trying to think back to December 31, 1942, to the start of this diary and the situation then . . . It has been a full year for us and for

Argentina, but it's not the Argentina I've known in the past. . . . This is still a country of peace and prosperity, still a land that has missed the misery of war, the pain of starvation . . . Nature tosses out favors in fistfuls, but each day brings new evidence that the self-anointed military is fanatically determined to make over this fair, rich land to its own authoritarian stamp. The world marches toward the freedoms of the United Nations' declarations of Cairo and Teheran, but Argentina, rich in things material, poor in liberties and freedoms, heads off on her own direction.

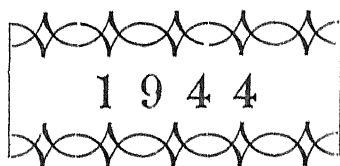
Tonight's papers bring a sharp new blow; all political parties are to be dissolved. I have *Crítica* here in front of me. Top news is the political party dissolution. Across the middle of the page is a strip of photos. Ramírez, ramrod-stiff, grins and shakes hands with members of his Cabinet, having just decreed the wiping out of the last of the groups that might have given the regime any opposition. Over on the side is a long editorial: "*El Año de la Esperanza*" (The Year of Hope). "1944," says *Crítica*, "is the year of victory." There is talk of Roosevelt and Churchill, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek, but it is all subtle, very subtle, and very roundabout. No attacking the Axis and nothing about what the coming year may mean to Argentina. It is an editorial that expresses the *criollo* feeling this last day of 1943. Hope, yes, but discouragement as well. A feeling that democracy will have to win elsewhere in the world before it can return to the *pampa*, regardless of neutrality or foreign policy.

On inside pages a few other items of news. A proposal by Dr. Manuel A. Zuloaga that Argentina should contribute to the solution of post-war immigration problems by accepting a million orphans, children of Latin-European origin. No men and women, for "their physique and morals and probably ideals have been undermined by the war." Just children. An ambitious scheme, but hardly one that will get very far.

A year-end balance by *Cabildo* summing up 1943 in Argentina as the Nazis see it. Last year they were full of praise for Castillo, today he rates *Cabildo's* blackest epitaph: "He was in the pay of the mercenary foreigners."

Colonel Perón, who sounds more and more like a "ham" actor each day, has nabbed himself the top billing spot to farewell '43. All radio stations have been instructed to carry his speech to the nation just

before midnight. The setting will be perfect. Anybody who tries to tune in for a bit of tango or jazz to dance out the old year, will get Perón, followed by bells. The New Year will toll in as the applause-loving Colonel assures Argentines just how happy he intends to make them—under his pattern, of course—next year. But his speech won't be the only thing to be thankful for. A few days ago he sent telegrams to 300 leading Argentine firms "suggesting" that, as year-end gift, they should present bottles of wine and loaves of *pan dulce* (a holiday Latin-style fruit cake), *turron* and other sweets to all employees. It was a suggestion with a kick in it, for he asked that the companies advise him "just how pleased the employees had been." Refusal under these conditions will be difficult. Perón gets the credit and the companies get the bill. Already they are calling him Colonel Santa Claus, or *Coronel Pan Dulce*.



JANUARY 1, 1944

I've just had a look back at my entry for January 1, 1943. Argentine neutrality seemed to be the big question then. Now people have reached the point of accepting it as inevitable and thinking about something infinitely more serious to them—the fascist path down which their self-appointed Government is shoving them. Argentina's New Year's Eve gaiety, it seemed to me, wasn't quite the same as last year's. Somehow a feeling of repression was in the air, a feeling that there's trouble ahead for this rich and hitherto self-contented land. And horn-blowing and *fiesta*-making seemed just a bit strained.

This morning's papers, fat with the congratulatory greetings which always fill their pages at this season, give the local doings precedence over the world news, as if suddenly aware that it can happen here. "Relentless Pounding of Hitler's Forces," says the headline over the story of how heavy bombers of the Eighth U.S.A. Air Force, escorted by North American and R.A.F. fighters attacked military objectives in France. The suburbs of Paris—Argentina's spiritual home—are bombed, but Buenos Aires, itself free of bombs, suffers new blows against the freedoms which once made it the jewel of Latin-American Republics. The top headlines go to the news that all political parties have been dissolved. The decree is brief, military-like: "One of the principal objectives of the June 4th patriotic movement," it says, "was to put an end to the grave process of corruption which had resulted in the withdrawal of the best elements in the country from politics and had bred skepticism even among the best-inspired

citizens. The political organizations did not respond to the realities of the nation's political life, nor are they the authentic representatives of public opinion, due to the fact that they had drifted from their true purpose . . . and used fraud, bribes and venality . . . seeking private benefits to the exclusion of the country's legitimate interests. It is the decided purpose of this Government to restore the nation's political life to its true course, where it will fulfill its real purpose in accordance with the culture and capacity of our citizens and our traditions."

That many of Argentina's political parties had become corrupt and lost their standing with the people is admitted, but their arbitrary head-chop by decree has served to strike another blow at those who somehow hoped the regime planned to re-establish a Constitutional form of Government, calling on the country's top statesmen to serve, regardless of previous affiliations. Next step, it is freely predicted, will be the formation of a State Party, like those in Germany and fascist Italy.

Also today comes another move to tighten control on the morals, as well as the minds, of Argentina—compulsory State-administered Roman Catholic instruction in all schools. Anti-Semitic, bigoted Martinez Zuviria and his Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction will supervise the teaching via a new Department of Religious Instruction. Children whose parents object may be excused and instead will get "moral instruction and ethics." We already suspect what that might be. The decree imposing religious teaching says that the military had as one of its basic purposes, the reestablishment of the Constitution, adding that since teaching the nation's children is "one of the most effective factors in bringing about national union, it is inconceivable that this education should be carried out in a spirit directly opposed to that of the Constitution. Each and every one of the Constitutions given to the country from the Provisional Statutes of 1815, those of 1817, the Constitutions of 1819 and 1826 down to the present Constitution, adopted in 1853, have always upheld the Roman Catholic faith and appealed to God for justice and strength in their application," it adds. "To be President of the nation it is necessary to be a member of the Roman Catholic faith. To put an end to corrupt administration, children must be taught religion—anything else is atheism which begins in the systematic repudiation of the name of God and ends in the negation of His

existence and laws, thus destroying one of the strongest factors in national unity. An official school without religion is an anti-democratic, unconstitutional school, which cannot prepare any child for the supreme honor to which all Argentines should aspire, that of being President." It's an explanation which few take seriously.

(Note)

Colonel Perón was bluffed out of his dramatic, end-of-the-year spot for his broadcast last night. He wanted to grab the microphone so that his closing words would chime into the Happy New Year, but Colonel Gonzalez, who appears to be using Ramírez to carry on his fight with Perón, somehow worked things so that Perón went on at 11.30, followed by President Ramírez just before midnight. "The stock market is fluctuating," is the story that goes the round of the cafés today. "Ramírez has gone up to 11.55 and Perón is down to 11.30."

JANUARY 2nd

The shuffling of the Provincial Interventors continues as the regime seeks to strengthen and solidify its control. Dr. Julio Oscar Ojea has been named as Interventor of the Province of Buenos Aires, replacing the duel-fighting General Armando Verdaguer. Dr. Ojea has had a rather important career, representing Argentina in several law congresses abroad, and has also had a number of political appointments in the Province of Buenos Aires. He's strongly pro-nationalist. The new line-up, Interior Minister General Perlinger announces, will be the last for a while. All the Interventors submitted their resignations when Perlinger took over from Gilbert and he confirmed only four—Colonel Ernesto Ramírez in Entre Rios, General José Morales Bustamante in Salta, Paymaster-Inspector Francisco A. Senesi of the Navy, in Catamarca, and Dr. Alberto Baldrich in Tucumán. The new ones are: Cordoba: Vice-Admiral Leon S. Scasso (he's one of the strongest pro-Nazis in Argentina and an aspirant to Argentine Gauleitership); Santa Fé: Engineer Manuel Arguelles; San Luis: Colonel Horacio Carranza; San Juan: Dr. David Uriburu (nephew

of the late General); Jujuy: Colonel Emilio Forcher; La Rioja: Colonel Rodolfo L. Varas; Mendoza: Colonel Aristobulo Vargas Belmonte, Santiago del Estero; Lieutenant Colonel Semberoig.

It is still early for complete reaction to the compulsory-religious-teaching announcement, but the shrill cheers from the official Catholic newspaper, *El Pueblo*, are especially strong. *Pueblo*, which claims to consider all sides impartially but which is plainly anti-United States, and strongly against anything it considers immoral, licentious or just liberal, gives particular praise to Martinez Zuviria for the step. *Pueblo*, which hasn't too high an opinion of the country's youth and never fails to jump into print to show it, has long been calling for a Government more like that of Spain, for less skimpy bathing suits, elimination of birth control and outlawing free love, claiming that "behind the shield of liberty corruption flourishes and the mercenary sell their consciences free and undetained." "The liberty about which so much that is said in speeches or in print," says *Pueblo*, "is the liberty to speak ill of the Government, to vociferate opinions in the streets and to publish newspapers containing libels, insults and baseless attacks on authority or persons. We would do well to denounce a little of this liberty. Every citizen should be disciplined." This opinion from *Pueblo* happens to be the kind of opinion which many of Argentina's wealthy families advocate. Advocate, it should be noted, for "the people," since they know it doesn't concern them and they don't worry overmuch so long as their privileges are not molested. Compulsory religious teaching, they feel, is a good thing. It will make the poor more resigned to accepting authority, help fight communism and maybe halt some of the ideas "which agitators are always trying to stir up." The wealthy *damas de sociedad*, who run their pet charities for the deserving poor with Government assistance, are also pleased, for this will give further aid to their efforts. Ties between Church and State, severed with so much effort by democracies everywhere else, will undoubtedly be strengthened, but the general feeling is that it will also unite the Government's opposition, which, forced underground by the dissolution of the political parties, will have the spur of fighting for its very existence. The foreign communities are especially disconcerted.

The press was called round to the Palacio San Martín shortly after noon today so that Foreign Minister Gilbert—out of a sick bed specially for the purpose—could personally announce recognition of the fourteen-day-old Bolivian revolutionary Government. Looking weak and tired, Gilbert spoke indistinctly, but the double-talk was the same as usual. He said, in effect, that Argentina's decision "did not break the solid American front, but on the contrary strengthened it" inasmuch as it "brought out of isolation one of the nations of the Americas." Argentina's attitude, he added, "confirms the circumstances proper to our international position." The official communiqué explained that as soon as the Government had received sufficient information to arrive at an opinion regarding the scope of the Bolivian coup, steps had been taken for an exchange of ideas with Bolivia's closest neighbors, Brazil, Paraguay and Chile. Gilbert emphasized recognition of Bolivia's new military Junta was "an expression of the desire of the people," but it has hit most Argentines with a sickening but not unexpected thud. The public's mood, it seems to me, is one of futility and resignation. There appears to be little tendency to think or believe in fighting back. Argentines have the feeling that the regime is going to have its own way, regardless of public opinion, either in the country or the rest of the hemisphere. The will to resistance seems gone, at least for the present. Although as a non-belligerent neutral, Argentina has not been asked to collaborate in any of the pre-consultation plans regarding Bolivian recognition, most Argentines did not believe their Government would give the nod to La Paz, if for no other reason than that it would confirm the many whispered stories that somehow Argentina had a definite part in tossing out the Peñaranda Government. That the military expected this is indicated in some measure by the length of its labored memorandum, giving reasons for the recognition, including, no less, a string of quotations from United States international-law experts.

What stand the other American Republics will take isn't yet certain, but the opinion I round up here makes me think that they're all going to hold back and that the La Paz inner circle is already well aware of how it stands. Dr. Luis Iturralde Chinel, of the Bolivian Legation in Montevideo, has apparently already given up

hope, for he has issued a formal statement, calling Uruguayan Vice-President Guani "a traditional enemy of Bolivia." If the La Paz Junta felt that it had any chance of a favorable verdict from Guani's Inter-American Consultative Committee, it wouldn't start tossing out scallions at its chairman. The report is that both Argentina and Axis agents operating from here had a hand in the Bolivian coup. No one knows the extent of this data or what the American Republics are going to do about it but, should it be released, the results would undoubtedly shake the hemisphere and turn the gas under Argentina's hot seat up a few degrees higher.

JANUARY 4th

It seems the ubiquitous Fritz Mandl, who is seen only occasionally (usually with blondes, as if to forget ex-wife Hedy Lamarr) has strengthened his hand with the military and is serving as their one-man brain trust to build up an Argentine armament and munitions industry. Mandl's publicly offered explanation of what he's up to is that he's running a bicycle factory—but there is a lot more than bikes coming out of his establishment these days. Mandl's plants are making munitions and war matériel and so are dozens and dozens of other converted factories in the big working-class district of Avellaneda and in other *barrios* out along the belt-line highway round Buenos Aires; plants that formerly turned out everything from bottle tops to car couplings, are now producing shells, guns and explosives.

Unable to get United States or British arms because of Argentina's insistence on neutrality, the Army, I understand from excellent sources, has been able to secure all kinds of models from Europe, some from Spain, more from Germany through Spain. With these, and with Mandl's genius and know-how, they have been able to produce reasonable facsimiles that pack a high death-dealing capacity. All of this is kept very hush-hush and employees in the factories have been given fully as many instructions to keep their lips buttoned up as have the workers in United States plants. Army men are in charge of every such *fabrica* and, since it's one field that they know, they have been a lot more efficient in this department than they have in running Governmental affairs. They have even

production. Because many of the items they need can no longer be imported, they have been forced to evolve substitutes and the progress they have made is really amazing.

The military insist that Argentina has no war aims, but that it merely desires—as former Foreign Minister Storni explained in his note to Secretary Hull—to “re-establish the equilibrium” in Latin America, meaning to develop muscles as hard as Brazil’s. This, they add, is “protective security.” The Brazilian answer is that she arms because she is preparing to send an expeditionary force abroad and that, as a war participant whose ships have been sunk and whose citizens’ lives have been lost, her aims are not to prepare for any scrap with her neighbors.

The whole question of Latin America’s rearmament is a tough one. Our own military experts say that the only arms that the States are supplying to Latin America are those necessary for continental defense. They realize that shipping arms to some countries is like giving the baby a sizzling Roman candle and a box of matches and then warning them not to try and mix the two. And Argentina’s own rearming program, especially when you remember who is doing it, portends danger.

JANUARY 5th

A new press-gag law, as severe as anything ever seen outside of Rome and Berlin, is announced tonight. It not only gags the press but ties and knots the rope. The hypocrisy of the explanation offered makes it all the more amazing. “Whereas,” says the preamble of the decree, “the press, in compliance with its mission, is carrying out a social function of first importance which has as its objective the direction of public information in matters of common welfare by means of disseminating the truth . . . it is the duty of the State to assure to the press the normal development of its activities and watch over the dignity of the right of free expression of ideas, insuring that such activities shall not be affected by commercial interests.”

In other words, all of this is supposed to make sure that the press

remains free of what the Government considers its chief perverting influences—United States advertisers who give their ads only to pro-democratic papers. The decree also finds an excuse in Article 14 of the National Constitution which declares that it is the right of all inhabitants of the State to publish their ideas through the press without prior censorship but (and this is *the* but which matters) “subject to legislation which is now strengthened and amplified.”

Here in brief are the high points of the decree: Article 1. Anything relating to publishing is declared of public interest and subject to the new rules. Article 2. All organs edited in Argentina must be inscribed in a press register which will be set up for that purpose by the Under-Secretariat of Information and Press. Non-inscription means closure. Article 3. In addition to names, office locations, data on officials, etc., balance sheets must be submitted with data on the source of all funds. All this within thirty days. Article 4. Prohibited are publications: “a) Contrary to the general interests of the nation or which disturb public order; b) which transgress Christian morals or good customs; c) which are detrimental to the good relations which the nation maintains with friendly countries; d) which contain injurious statements against public functionaries and private institutions in general; e) which lower the moral or cultural standards of the people; f) which publish total or partially false news, or publish material in a manner as to mislead and deceive the people to the detriment of general or private interests.”

Right after this comes the punch. The Under-Secretariat “will withdraw from circulation any publication, irrespective of its origin, which is considered to be outlined by the terms of this decree. Details will be passed to the respective authority for putting penal action into effect. The author, editor, and owner will be absolutely responsible for any news, commentary or article published. In the case of a clandestine edition, the proprietor of the printing establishment will also be responsible. Every editorial, article, commentary or contribution, must be published over the signature of its author. The original, duly signed, will be filed by the management for a period of sixty days. If a *nom de plume* is used, the original will, in addition, bear the real signature of the author.

“All papers will be obliged to publish official communiqués and information when ordered to do so by the Under-Secretary. They must use these in the manner indicated by him (meaning size of

type, position, etc.). All papers which directly or indirectly receive aid or assistance from foreign powers must advise the Under-Secretary and secure his approval. Newspaper concerns must maintain accountancy systems prescribed in the commercial code; must deliver their yearly balance sheets and may also be required to present monthly balances. (This information, it is stated, will be treated with the utmost reserve and in no case will it be handed to private persons.)

"There is to be a register of journalists, printers, etc., to which all those connected with papers or news distribution must be inscribed. Those with criminal records or under trial for such charges, violators of the military-service laws, persons who carry on activities contrary to the general interests of the nation, to morality and to good customs, or who disturb public order, and constant infractors of the terms of this decree, are all banned."

Now as to foreign correspondents: "Correspondents and news agencies resident in the Republic and representing the foreign press are covered by the clauses of the present decree. Of every news item or commentary which they transmit abroad, they must remit a copy, signed by the author, within four hours of its transmission. Transmission of all news and commentaries in violation of the terms of Article 4 is prohibited."

Infractions of any of the rules "will be liable to: a) admonition; b) suspension; c) elimination from the register; d) closing down of the periodical, of the company, and confiscation of the machinery and other implements; punishment will be applied in accordance with the gravity of the infraction and the record of the infractor." The Information Bureau will do the warning and suspending, and the Presidential Secretary the eliminating from the register and the closing.

Coincident with all this is a reorganization of the Press Secretariat in order to handle radio, films and theatre. The General Press Department is to "prepare for the President and the Cabinet Ministers general information, news commentaries and opinions of interest, provide papers with official information and insure fulfilment of the press statute."

The General Propaganda Department will "carry out and centralize all State propaganda, set up a register of official publications and supervise their expenses and hand out all official ads."

The Public Entertainment Department is to "take charge of the moral and cultural aspects of public entertainment; stimulate new film production, especially documentary pictures of national interest and the development of a national cinema and theatre." The radio set-up will "control wireless transmission in general; the transmission of news and information by radio, radio advertisting, rules and regulations for the National Speakers' Institute and a register of stations and artistic and technical personnel."

JANUARY 6th

The Argentine press, once the freest and best in Latin America, has been so stunned by the new press gag law that its plans are uncertain. There's a likelihood that if the pro-democratic papers can get together, joint voluntary closings may take place, but the chances are slim. The series of new decrees, newspapermen explain, provides such severe penalties for violations that many owners and editors are saying that it would only be a question of time before they were bound to be cited, unless they knuckled under completely. Most talked about is the well-remembered story of how Ezequiel Paz, owner of *La Prensa*, once told the military dictatorship of General Uriburu that if a similar threat were carried out, his paper would move, lock, stock and press, to Paris or some other place and there publish daily with a front-page notation that the paper could not be issued in Buenos Aires. It was Uriburu who backed down that time. *Prensa* and *Nacion* appeared this morning with strong editorials, the latter signed by *Nacion's* director, Doctor Luis Mitre, pointing out that they have always been the true exponents of public sentiments and indirectly hinting that there might be trouble if they were further gagged. This new decree, they point out privately, does not even employ Castillo's flimsy excuse—the need to maintain neutrality—which he used to impose the state of siege back in December, '41. The military has gone far beyond Castillo in putting papers on the carpet for even the slightest infractions of its constantly changing regulations. The sections of the new law which allow closings for anything considered contrary to the general interests, morals, culture, etc., means

that there will always be plenty of excuses which can be used with little trouble.

These new rules go into effect on February 1st. The papers here had been more or less expecting something like this, but the extent and severity of the decree have hit them hard. General feeling is that Colonel Gonzalez is responsible. His increasingly bitter opponent, Colonel Perón, has already spread the word among some of his journalistic cronies that he'll make sure the new bill will not be enforced "as is." Press Censor Ladvocat's assistant, Major Peralta, who is especially interested in using the newsreels as official propaganda, has passed out the word that the decree is partly intended to curb the Nazi-Fascist dailies, which he thinks are "too indiscreet." He objects principally to their almost outright subsidization by the German Embassy, otherwise the general trend of their contents meets with his approval.

JANUARY 7th

La Vanguardia, the invariably liberal, generally well-edited daily newspaper of the Socialist Party becomes the first victim of the new press-gag law. "In view of the impossibility of freely complying with our social duty, we cease publication as from today," *Vanguardia* says in a front-page editorial. Recalling its independence since its founding on April 7, 1894, *Vanguardia* points out that "Political parties have been dissolved, theological dogma installed in the schools, the press, radio and films regimented, and now the press can no longer use the pen as a method of spreading the truth and turning its light on the consciences of Argentines." "We will be back," *Vanguardia* adds.

Other newspapers are still undecided what they will do, but it seems likely that most of them will give in and accept what they regard as the inevitable. Editorial comment coming down from the States shows that this new move is at least understood up there. "Ramírez Puts Out the Light," is the title of a *New York Times* editorial that minces no words. But it cannot be printed here. Most local editorial comments are full of vague literary allusions which between-the-line readers can get. But none as good as *Vanguardia's*

editorial which has made such a hit that you can't buy copies for a peso a copy.

The United States has officially agreed to consult with other Western Hemisphere Governments before deciding on the recognition of the new Bolivian crowd. I understand that more and more information has been produced to show how the Argentine military, operating with Nazi-Fascist agents, worked under cover to help bring about the Bolivian coup. This dope is being passed back and forth from Mexico City to Santiago and will be mulled over by all the American Republics, before they move. There will be no conference as such, but the interchange of information amounts to practically the same thing.

JANUARY 8th

Much interest here in President Roosevelt's report to Congress on Lend-Lease expenditures, especially his figures on Latin America and his observation that no aid is being furnished Argentina. Total Lend-Lease shipments to Latin America from March '41 to October 31, '43, amounted to \$116,543,000. A "substantial portion" of this went to Brazil and the military here would certainly like to know exactly how much. Roosevelt pointed out that substantially all the aid was in fighting equipment—guns, aircraft, military vehicles and small naval craft, together with materials used in ordnance plants. In return, the President explained, Brazil and other American Republics have made available to us air and naval bases in Central America and along the Northern Coast of South America. His details on how the Brazilian Air Force was flying United States planes on the Atlantic patrol and sinking enemy subs and his pointing up Brazil's preparation to send troops to fight beside ours in Europe puts quite a different light on the what-are-we-getting-out-of-this picture than that offered by Senator Butler.

The Argentine military, which wants to buy arms from the United States, not Lend-Lease them, continues to put on a front of indifference to the growing strength of Brazil. One Army man whispered the other day: "If they isolate Bolivia and ourselves, remember that

Bolivia has copper and we shall substitute copper for the iron which is practically the only thing we haven't got." This is typical of the local reaction. The copper, even if it solved Argentina's problems, can't be smelted here, could hardly be transported and wouldn't make any planes or tanks. But that spoils the argument and so it's ignored.

JANUARY 9th

The compulsory teaching of Catholic religion draws a bouquet from Monsignor Copello, Cardinal of Buenos Aires. "The patriotism shown by Your Excellency in fulfilling one of the deepest hopes and greatest ambitions of the Argentine people, has recuperated for our country the morality of its great destinies, the path of which was shown by the great thinkers and heroes who forged its nationality," he writes Ramírez. Copello adds that this compulsory instruction "has laid the foundations of the peace, liberty, progress and social justice to which we have always aspired." Great words for a move which many liberal-minded people here condemn as a step backward. Because schools are not in session, no one is certain of all the reaction this move will bring. Foreign communities, particularly the English and American, whose background and inclination have always been toward absolute freedom of religion and complete divorcement of school and State, feel they will have to send their children back home for schooling. Minister of Instruction, Martínez Zuviria, is said to be preparing new text books for poor innocents.

JANUARY 10th

A bid for further labor support tonight from Colonel Perón. In a national broadcast to railway workers he promises a million-peso subsidy for a public assistance and social-welfare clinic. All personnel must join the controlled union and make a monthly contribution. This, says Perón, is the first act in securing unity between workmen and employers and the State, which the Government has been

pushing. "Public assistance and social welfare, until now carried on by isolated activities of professional associations, owners or the State, leads to a dispersal of effort and means, always prejudicial to the joint effort," he says. The new decree only covers state railways, but private lines, mostly British, are urged not to delay 'in associating themselves with the scheme.

A new clinic with 1,000 beds for surgical patients is to be set up. There will be outside services in different medical specialties, a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients in Cosquin, in the Province of Cordoba, on land already owned by the railway union, regional medical consulting rooms, etc. Workmen's wives and children will also get treatment. All in all, reaction seems to be that such a program might be helpful, but everything depends on its administration and how it is handled by the State.

Still plenty of attention to the Bolivian question. Consultations between various countries are under way, with the United States still holding off. Chile's President Rios, talking to the reporters over in Santiago, insists his country will remain democratic and intimates Chile will not recognize the new regime. By way of reassurance to those who fear a similar coup in Chile, Rios says: "The loyalty of the armed forces has never been questioned. They are absolutely free from political influence or interference."

JANUARY 12th

Really startling news today, but as usual it is regarded with suspicion. The anti-United States, anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, nationalist organizations are to be dissolved. The official announcement is brief: "All parties, groups and entities known as nationalists must cease, together with any such groups organized for political purposes, whether or not they have taken part in election campaigns." Reasons: "To bring about a truce in activities of this nature while the country is under guidance." Minister of the Interior, General Perlinger, a Perón appointee, is to take the necessary steps. The inside story is that Perón forced this move because his GOU opponent, Presidential Secretary Gonzalez, had pushed through the dissolution of the political parties. Perón favored their controlled

retention. Abolishing the political parties, while allowing the nationalists to continue, brought such a strong reaction and finger-pointing that Perón demanded the nationalist groups must also go. There is no doubt that he also had in mind the fact that these groups were among Gonzalez' principal supporters.

What makes people suspicious is that back in August, '41, Castillo, in a great show for the benefit of the democracies, ordered dissolution of the very same groups. Headed by retired General Juan Bautista Molina and retired Admiral Leon Scasso, they merely ducked under cover and later emerged with new names and a united front. Following the closing of their chief pro-democratic rival, *Accion Argentina*, last August, they grew by leaps and bounds and not only acted as chief pumpers for neutrality, but also propagandized against what they called "*yanqui*-British-Jewish capitalist-communism." Their dissolution at this time has less importance than it would have had previously for many of the things for which they have fought have already been put into effect, particularly the demands for concentration camps for liberals (automatically denounced as communists), the strait-jacket control of all labor unions, the dissolution of free political parties and the gags on the pro-democratic press which the nationalists have always insisted was under the domination of the *yanquis*.

A powerful under-cover battle seems to be going on behind the scenes among the members of the GOU. But according to the best sources I can contact, the outcome will not more than superficially affect Argentina's goose step down the fascist road to which the Army group has committed itself. Should the fight get into the open, however, it might well plunge the country and the southern half of this hemisphere into another Nazi-sought period of turmoil. The present tussle is the strongest since that which led to an almost suicidal Cabinet crisis last September and October, following Secretary of State Hull's crushing thumbs-down to Argentina's plea for guns, planes and tanks. Combatants in this new fight are the forces headed by Colonel Perón and those of Colonel Gonzalez. Each has powerful supporters, many in key spots. If there is an out and out loser, it would not be surprising that he might take counter steps.

Perón has certainly been courting attention and publicity for himself and seeking to win every kind of group in the country from

the strongly pro-democratic to the outrightly Axis. He's been tipping off more and more people that he would break relations if he could. Gonzalez has not been asleep, however. He has on his side several of the Cabinet members responsible to him, together with the Interventors of certain provinces, the heads of state boards and official bodies. It's amazing how many people are aware of this fight and how many realize its implications. In fact, this morning's papers carry a despatch from Rio telling how the newspaper *O Globo* there interviewed Gonzalez by long-distance phone and heard him say: "I speak in the name of the President, General Ramírez." Gonzalez refused to answer the question as to why Argentina was the first Latin country to recognize Bolivia. When the Brazilian paper asked him about a recent article by Sumner Welles attacking Argentina's pro-fascist policy and particularly citing the control imposed by the GOU, Gonzalez answered: "Such a question is indiscreet and I will not answer." (The Sumner Welles story was not allowed to be printed here, although *La Nación* has carried other articles in the Welles series.) Gonzalez emphasized that the Argentine people and its Government are friendly to Brazil and that they would continue to work together to protect American interests. Asked about any possible sympathy or interests of the Argentine for the Axis, Gonzalez answered: "The Argentine people are not interested in the internal problems of other countries."

JANUARY 13th

Reports are growing that both the United States and the British are planning a crack-down on Argentina via economic sanctions. Such stories have been going the rounds for almost a year and to some extent limited sanctions have actually been imposed. But up to now we've talked of them more than we've carried out our threats, even though we've suffered for the threat without gaining the advantage of the sanction itself. Secretary Hull, at his press conference today, declined to confirm or deny the reports, and added that he had nothing to reveal at this time about the possibility that he, the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, had met to discuss the subject. From London

we learn that South American securities generally and not merely those of Argentina have dropped as a result of the economic-sanctions reports. Sanctions might take several forms: a refusal to sell more goods to the Argentine, even further freezing of funds, a boycott on Argentine goods, etc. There's plenty of evidence to indicate that the United Nations' patience with Argentina is reaching a close. I think the situation is definitely coming to a head, but it's being decided in London and Washington, not here.

The Chilean situation seems to be clearing up somewhat. The resignations of two liberal members, Arturo Matte and Osvaldo Vial, have been turned down by President Ríos. In a lengthy letter, Ríos says that the collaboration of the Ministers has helped bring about reforms in the Government and that "Their patriotism and experience are important for the welfare of the country." And for the hemisphere as well, for new upsets in the Latin apple cart now would be especially dangerous.

Formation of an Argentine official State Party patterned after Germany's National-Socialists, Franco's Falange, and Italy's Fascismo appears to be definitely under consideration, but decision must await the outcome of other more vital problems, especially the increasing pressure being applied by the States and Britain and the struggle for power and superiority now going on behind the scenes. Ramírez, I now learn, had never given up hope of being able to work with the political parties. Neither has Perón. In recent weeks he had been talking to the same Radical Party *caudillos* as Ramírez. Each was trying to determine the chances of his being the party candidate in a supervised election which would take outward democratic form but yet be rigged to turn out the right way. Now that the parties have been dissolved, the effort seems to be to try to convince the people that something better will come while, at the same time, prevent any moves by the people to bring about that betterment.

One item of somewhat brighter news today after a long period of gloomy stories: A decree has been issued suspending the application of a previous law covering the expulsion of foreigners from the country for a number of offenses. The preamble to the decree states that the measure has been taken to give an opportunity to those who would have been expelled under the letter of the law but "who in the meantime have seen the error of their ways, ob-

tained means of livelihood and, by following the path of honesty and work, are today valued members of society." Also to be forgiven are those "who, in a mistaken moment, adopted exotic ideologies, or perturbed the public peace." A careful study is to be made of each foreigner liable to expulsion. While some Nazis who have been cited will benefit by this eleventh-hour reprieve, it is expected that for the most part refugees, both those from Germany and from Spain, will be aided.

JANUARY 14th

First the punch and then the caress. Groggy from the new press-gag law imposed less than a fortnight ago, the Argentine press was called in today for its first Presidential mass interview of the New Year. Colonel Gonzalez, a broad smile on his face, did the interviewing; his right-hand man, Colonel Ladvocat, near by to shepherd the notetakers into the right places and to shush down any impertinent question-askers. It was supposed to have been a question-and-answer session, but most of the time was devoted to Gonzalez' reading of a lengthy statement which more or less lined up a list of do's and don'ts for the press like these:

"The Government is not averse to constructive and balanced criticism, but it is *the duty* of the press to deny rumors, especially rumors that the regime has a fascist or Nazi tendency."

"It is *up to the press* to develop a better spirit of collaboration with the Government."

"It is *the duty* of the press to help 'mold' citizens into a new national conscience."

And finally: "I *must insist* that the press law be interpreted so as to prevent the return to journalism of those elements which perturb the cultural and educational work which has always been carried forward by the Argentine press since the days of its birth."

It was a long interview, full of other veiled threats and implications. Most interesting to me was what amounted to practically a spirited defense of the dissolved nationalist groups, which Gonzalez said had always had the patriotic interests of the country at heart, although possibly at times too much of the boys-will-be-boys spirit moved them.

"It is our purpose," Gonzalez said, "to prepare the country to take a new path in national ideology which will be formed when the circumstances allow and which will permit the citizens to fall in behind their acknowledged leaders, always provided these accept the true meanings of the words 'country,' 'home,' and 'Christianity,' which should be their guides through life."

This was regarded by some of the press men as proving the fact that what the Government has in mind is the formation of a real one-party State. Nobody can figure out what "acknowledged leaders" means, but the guesses are that it refers to whatever leaders the military selects.

There was no great sigh of expectation when Gonzalez announced that henceforth Ramírez himself would meet the newspapermen at least once a month for the "beneficial interchange of ideas." Praising the newspapers for the way in which they had "collaborated" with the Government, Gonzalez added that in the interval between June 4th and today, "the bad press had disappeared, not because it had been muzzled or censored but by a process of purifying of the bad men who formed it." The boys had little difficulty catching that one. So many papers have been suspended since June 4th that it has been practically impossible to keep track of them. A majority have been allowed to resume publication but under strict control. The Nazi-fascist press is still going strong and the papers that have definitely and permanently been halted are headed by *La Hora*, an alleged communist daily which has always been strongly pro-democratic, and *Vanguardia*, the socialist paper which bowed out at its own volition. Even the extensive "lunch" which Gonzalez offered to the press men after his speech didn't do much to make them feel better.

The press doesn't get all the restrictions, however. Another decree just announced orders municipalities in the interior to grant certain tax rebates to theatres which concentrate on Argentine films. Those who show nothing but Argentine pictures will get 75% of their taxes back, those who make up half their programs with national films will get 40% back and so on down the scale. This will definitely hit at Hollywood pictures, which have long been the most popular shown here. The national industry has done pretty well in developing its own audiences, especially in the interior, where many prefer to see pictures in Spanish because following the

English dialogue through Spanish sub-titles is not always easy for small-town audiences. The movie men are certain that the tax kick-backs will have a joker to them. So far, only Argentine newsreels and the short films have been pressed into the propaganda service, but feature films will probably be next.

JANUARY 15th

Predictions of revolutions and military coups elsewhere in Latin America are coming off but much more quickly than I would have believed possible. News comes from Lima tonight that a revolutionary movement, planned to take place on December 31st, had been frustrated "as a result of news received from confidential sources abroad." Measures have been quickly taken, certain documents regarding the plot have been found and subversive elements checked, it is announced. German and Japanese citizens so far discovered as having been complicated, have already been arrested and will be deported shortly.

The December 31st plot, Lima declares, was to follow the well-known Nazi system. "All Jewish establishments were to be the object of feigned attacks but this was discovered in time and halted." The subversive elements, it added, were planning that disturbances should occur in Lima and in the provincial capitals. "No disorder had been allowed to occur because many arrests had been made." The explanation, however, is not quite so easy as that. There's an election coming on in Peru and some experts here think that possibly the round-up move tied in with this, and that those nabbed were considered potentially dangerous to the Prado regime. Recognizing this, the Peruvian Government specifically denies its action was in any way related to the forthcoming campaign, noting that "special care has been taken not to violate the right of any groups," and adding: "We can say with pride that it is the first time in the history of Peru that four years of constitutional Government have gone by without a single subversive movement having been registered."

The Bolivian situation is still open. Lend-Lease shipments have been stopped and, until further notice, all applications for export

to Bolivia will have to be cleared through Economic Administration Headquarters in Washington.

Mexico's Foreign Minister, Ezequiel Padilla, has proposed a conference to discuss the Bolivian situation, but this does not appear likely since the American Republics are already exchanging information and will probably reach a conclusion without having to sit down together.

Important news from Chile. Axis properties there are to be nationalized, which will put them under official control and probably help halt many of the activities which the Nazis have been using to build up their own position for the post-war period. It's the very step which those experts to whom I talked last November have been urging as the only way in which Axis economic influence can be eliminated. Those concerns which are taken over by Chile and whose status is cleared may then be removed from the United States and British blacklist.

Even the birds are to be controlled now, say the wags, and it's quite official. Latest sealed-and-stamped decree puts all Argentine pigeons "fit for use in national service" under the direct supervision of the Ministry of War. The General Interior Communications Command will direct all pigeon-flying activities, official or private; will define the type of birds which are considered suitable for national defense purposes and will create regional pigeon-flying organizations. Rules under which they can operate must be submitted to the military for approval. All pigeons coming within the scope of the new measures shall bear a distinctive identification mark and their owners entered in a special register. Insiders say that pigeon control has always been a favorite hobby of Ramírez', who feels that carrier pigeons have an important wartime role. He has raised and trained many of his own.

A few export statistics for '43 are given out today by the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. They show an increase in exports of 22.1% in value as compared with the figures for '42, while tonnage shows only a small decrease of 0.3. Total value of Argentina's exports during '43 has risen from 1,788,958,000 to 2,184,705,000 pesos accounted for in part by the increase in the

export volume and value of animals on the hoof, dairy products, pastoral by-products, etc. The greater part of the increase in value has been caused by the demand for a number of manufactured articles for which there is keen competition on an ever-rising war market.

JANUARY 16th

Last night, at dinner, we were just having sherry when the chandeliers began to shake. "It's those people upstairs running around again!" our host remarked. But a few minutes later, when one of the boys from the U.P. called, we learned it was something else—an earthquake up in the Province of San Juan. For three hours, all communications were cut off, but finally rescue parties got through from the provincial capital of Mendoza in the rich, grape-growing and wine-making district close to the Andes. At this writing, only part of the story is known, but there are at least several hundred dead, 70% of the city has been damaged and possibly thousands injured. According to the early reports, the initial quakes caused a panic. They came just at the time when many were sitting down to dinner and struck without warning. The first quake continued for almost an hour with a terrible rumbling and roaring underground to add to the fright. Not only was the city of San Juan hit but much of the area around about was badly shaken. All sorts of medical help is already being sent up from Buenos Aires, from Mendoza and from Cordoba. No one is yet certain how serious is the damage, but the Army has announced it has taken charge and will carry through. Impossible to get a plane seat up to Mendoza, but a train may be available later today.

(Later)

The San Juan earthquake has been far more serious than anyone at first believed possible. Until tonight's papers came out, the public had only a small idea of what was happening, because for some reason, the authorities decided they wanted to control all the news being broadcast and forbade anything but official announcements

on the air. As a result, while listeners in every other country of the hemisphere had all the details available from San Juan, nothing could be broadcast here except the very brief official handouts. The need for blood-donors became so great, however, that broadcasters were finally allowed to open up but only to carry an appeal by Colonel Perón.

Estimates of the number killed vary. *Critica* says 3,500 dead and 7,000 injured. *Noticias Graficas* is a little more reserved. A few eyewitness accounts have come down but what's really happened is still pretty much a mystery. Appeals for *pesos* are already being made, special trains have gone forward with food, clothing and medical assistance, both from Buenos Aires and from Mendoza. Theaters and motion-picture houses throughout the nation have been closed.

(Still Later)

Perón has just addressed the country on a nation-wide hookup. If the Government's purpose in forbidding broadcasts about the catastrophe was not to alarm the Argentine people, the *Coronel* has frustrated it. Nothing could have been more frightening than his account. The ban on news broadcasts has been lifted. You already get a very clear impression that the regime is out to prove how much it is helping the people of San Juan, but there seems to be much rivalry between the different departments—each colonel wants to be able to claim the glory. Permits from one department are not accepted by the others. Perón's Secretariat of Labor and Welfare seems to be in the lead. The Press Secretariat, Perón's office, and the Radio Communications Department each give contradictory orders to the press and radio. Ramírez is leaving for San Juan tomorrow with several Ministers, but Perón will remain behind to run the show here.

JANUARY 18th (San Juan)

This is San Juan—last week a sunny, treelined, grape-pressing village at the foothills of the Andes, today a Dante-like inferno, destroyed

as few war towns have been broken; ruined, groggy and terrified of a new, earth-opening terror that still rumbles and groans underground. You stand in the central Plaza 25 de Mayo, now an improvised open-air hospital, as *medicos*, police, soldiers and civilians, eyes dust-rimmed, cheeks hollow, parched lips tightly clenched, try to sort out the still critical cases and send them to Mendoza, to Buenos Aires or anywhere away from here. "There is only one thing to be done," they tell you. "Evacuate the city, then dynamite what remains. It's impossible to build here again."

Some of the streets have been cleared, emergency lighting set up for relief workers. But there's no water, no place to cook the vast and sometimes useless amounts of food sent up. Funeral pyres watched by silent, blank-eyed crowds, smoke night and day. Walking the streets, you get the feeling of what it must have been like when death—not the expected death of war but the black death of the earth—vomited in the night. San Juan is a city without a smile, a city of tragic reunions and ever-present shadows.

San Juan and Argentina were totally unprepared for the catastrophe. Stories you hear still send chills up the spine. The first shock was the most heart-clutching of all. Those still alive groped blindly in the black night, tearing at masses of rubble in the desperate hope of finding loved ones. Hardly a house unruined and no place to turn for help. It was not until hours later that ambulances began to arrive from Mendoza, that those uninjured were able to establish some semblance of order so as to aid those to whom aid might still be given.

The Government issues pompous communiqués, grandiosely worded, describing its own supposedly efficient and prompt measures. The people of San Juan—if they hear only half of these grandiloquent claims—grin wryly, tremble with anger and mutter imprecations. "*Son unos animales*," they stutter, "*unos animales locos*." The Interventor of the Province, David Uriburu, has been superseded by the Military Interventor, Colonel Sosa Molina, a man with a ruthless reputation for iron-handedness. Whatever the civil authorities command, is promptly countermanded by the military and the bitter tug of war—a replica of that going on in Buenos Aires—continues, while the people suffer and are tortured in the constant wrangling between one and the other. All that seems of real im-

portance to the military is the impression they are creating. The earthquake has been their heaven-sent opportunity, and with it they are playing politics. Perhaps some of those buried alive might yet have been rescued, but the demolition squads are suddenly delayed in their work. The President is to arrive, the streets and road must be cleared first. Confused, the tired rescue squads start throwing back the rubble on to the terrible sepulchres under which the dead lie, so that the President's car may pass impressively through cleared roadways—tangible proof of military efficiency!

In nearby Mendoza, kind-hearted citizens present themselves to the Police Department, beg to be allowed to take home some of the hundreds of homeless orphans crowded into the patio; children who, after mind-searing experiences, have been herded there for two days, without food, and sleeping out in the open. "Ah, no," say the police. "They can't be taken away. You see, the Minister is arriving tomorrow, and he'll want to inspect them." Yes, inspect them and be photographed doing it.

JANUARY 19th (*San Juan*)

The real hero of the San Juan tragedy has been a young engineer who held the loudspeaker concession in one of the plazas. He was on his way to a church to attend the tragedy-marked wedding whose entire party is still buried under the ruins of the church. Taking his equipment, because it was a San Juan custom to broadcast these ceremonies, he was about to enter the church. A friend stopped him for a chat and so saved his life. When the earthquake came, the engineer in double time had his equipment up and tirelessly, for days on end, worked at his microphone, broadcasting news of those saved for their families to hear. His husky, tired voice is a sound *Sanjuaninos* will remember forever in their prayers.

Carlos Taquini, Radio El Mundo's famous commentator (traitor, to Argentine Nazis, who hate his reading of "bad" news from the battle fronts) broadcasting from the Plaza 25 de Mayo, carried on—but with blanched countenance—as the stretcher bearers deposited mutilated bodies, just extracted from the ruins, at his feet.

When President Ramírez arrived, a mass was held in the open plaza, amidst the wounded and the rescued. As Taquini announced the President, the earth started to rumble menacingly, horribly. Instinctively all present were propelled forward in a mad rush. Then their Argentine sense of dignity suddenly reasserted itself. The General—whatever else he may be—at that moment had his valor vindicated. He stood to attention once more and the minute's silence he had asked for was observed by the crowd, while underfoot Nature rumbled her awesome protest.

The San Juan tragedy has proved valuable in one sense—the discovery as to what people are close to Ramírez, if the crowd accompanying him to San Juan was any criterion. In charge of the Presidential bodyguards on the train was young Leopoldo Lugones, the local Himmler, who seems to have recovered from his recent beating. "How can Ramírez admit to his confidence a man who has published insulting remarks about Senora Ramírez?" is a question the newsmen kept asking. The rest of the entourage despise Lugones, who has no officially designated post. The Nazi Trans-Ocean representative was one of the most favored reporters on the Presidential train. There has been a great deal said about the simplicity of the President's manner of living, of how he gave orders that only one dish was to be served on the Presidential train, thus sharing the hardships of the suffering *Sanjuaninos*. One local newsman told me that 1,600 pesos worth of cigarettes were consumed en route. Officially the crowd of hangers-on, officials and so on who traveled with him are supposed to pay their way, but this never happens. However, my informant added his belief that Ramírez is sincere in his feeling for the people and anxious to do all he can, but it's impossible for one man to do everything—especially when those surrounding him are really only interested in their personal power and ambition.

Ramírez on the train back talked of the horrors he had seen, the collaboration he hoped to get from the country to relieve and rebuild San Juan. "I *must* have this collaboration, I *shall* have it and . . . if it's not given me, I shall take measures to get it." On the one hand he keeps insisting that the whole country is with him, on the other he threatens to make the country go with him. Can he have a split personality?

A "once-and-for-all" showdown on Nazi, fascist and Falangist fifth columning activities still going in Latin America through Argentina's open Axis doorway, seems to be shaping up. Washington and London have determined to force the issue to a finish as the result of an increasing number of incidents; latest the arrest of an Axis-spying Argentine consul by British authorities at Trinidad. The detention of the Consul, Oscar Hellmuth, was the result of the United Nations' counter-espionage spotting of his activities with enemy agents in Argentina and Europe. Knowing from long and bitter experience that they'd be unable to get much co-operation from Argentine officialdom if Hellmuth were denounced in Buenos Aires, they allowed him to board the Spanish vessel *Cabo de Hornos* in October and had the British nab him when his ship called at the control port of Trinidad.

Hellmuth's arrest—revealed to the public last night—has, I understand, capped an airtight case which the British, the United States and some co-operative Latin Republics have been working on for some time. Some of the details were sent back here on January 15th—the night of the earthquake—with the direct warning to the Ramírez Government that the now-or-never time had arrived. The showdown would have come earlier, except for the San Juan earthquake, which more or less put things off; but now the United Nations are again pressing Argentina.

The Government announced today, not without considerable embarrassment, that it had already proceeded to make other arrests and had ordered "the dismissal of the official who appears implicated," plus "an investigation of the whole matter and adoption of necessary measures to put an end to all activities which are contrary to our international policy." No information as yet regarding those already held, but people familiar with the manner in which Berlin has been using Madrid agents more and more as its eyes and ears in Latin America, say that many higher-ups are involved—if Argentina is willing to go after them. The Hellmuth case is only one incident. Secretary Hull in announcing United States non-recognition of Bolivia, spoke of outside agents but didn't mention that they might have some connection with Argentina. Still, the impression is definite here that these subversive forces—whether or not

they were Argentine—were at least operating from Argentina and with knowledge of the regime.

Another case disclosed today by the newspaper *La Razon* in Montevideo: A plot to break the inter-American front through efforts directed by the German Embassy in Buenos Aires. *Razon* yesterday splashed copies of a code message signed by one Rupert Weilharter, described as an official of the German Embassy in Buenos Aires, directed to Robert Kellmann, a Reich agent in Brazil. It detailed Hitler's hope for action in 1944 to damage relations between Brazil and the United States by the use of all anti-Semitic, anti-democratic elements who were to create incidents and disturbances. The Montevideo police this afternoon added further details, declaring a similar letter was sent to Axis agents throughout Latin America by Dr. Meynen, Nazi Chargé d'Affaires in Buenos Aires, and that certain steps, including the arrest of Enrique Jorges, an important Nazi agent operating in Uruguay, had already been taken. Jorges, it was stated, admitted possession of the original letter, which pointed out how both Brazil and Uruguay were to be focal points in the Nazi effort; how pro-Nazi military and political leaders were to be employed and how these steps to break the all-American front would cut down the shipment of vital war materials needed by the United Nations.

Argentina's failure to follow up on the spy-ring disclosed by the arrest and sentencing last month of the young Spanish medical student, Rosendo Almozara Lombera, is another important case. Still another is the way Spanish ships operating in the South Atlantic between Buenos Aires and Spanish ports have been carrying contraband for Axis submarines—cases which have been repeatedly denounced in London's House of Commons without resulting action. These facts, plus the recent incident of a German armed merchant ship sunk off the Brazilian coast, flying the Argentine flag (although this was officially denied by Buenos Aires) have seemingly convinced the United Nations that this is the time to strike against continued activities menacing the hemisphere and endangering United Nations' lives, ships and supplies.

I understand that while it has been put in diplomatic language, the inference both from the United States and England is that if Argentina doesn't break with the Axis and help bring about a cessation of these operations, Ambassador Kelly and Ambassador

Armour will be recalled home, this time for good, and the United Nations will break with Argentina. Furthermore, Washington would then probably let out some of the information it has been gathering since long before the war began to show just what has happened here, particularly what has happened since the new regime took office last June. Some of the data involving the Bolivian coup has already been exchanged with other American Republics and, if made public, would probably cause the Argentine people themselves to throw out the regime.

(Note)

Hellmuth was an insurance agent here for many years; had an extensive list of clients. When the war began he lost many of his English and American customers and his Nazi activities were intensified. Apparently this was common knowledge, at least to those who made it their business to investigate such things. About ten months ago he suddenly disappeared and few knew at that time that he had been appointed to a consular post by the Foreign Office, then headed by Enrique Ruiz Guinazú. One of the things that will be interesting to find out is how he got the job, especially considering that now Ruiz Guinazú is soon to go to Spain as Argentine Ambassador, the only Castillo Minister to return to an important post under the military.

JANUARY 23rd

Faced with a virtual ultimatum, the military is supposed to be in hot and heavy session to decide who will do the breaking—Argentina with the Axis or the United Nations with Argentina. This morning's papers appear with a story from Montevideo of an interview given there by Admiral Jones H. Ingram, Commander of the Allied Naval Forces in the South Atlantic. Only part of the full story is printed here. Ingram's indirect warnings to Argentina as I heard them on short-wave radio last night, are omitted, but there's no doubt but that the military got the full text and that it also knows just how many vessels, planes, etc., Ingram has with him on his unexpected "cour-

tesy call" across the Río de la Plata. "The United States and Brazil," Ingram says, "have sufficient strength to frustrate whatever intent the Axis might have against this hemisphere. The South Atlantic has been cleaned up of Axis boats."

Another bit of news the colonels will have to chew over today is the pending decision of this hemisphere's countries which have not yet spoken that they will refuse to recognize Bolivia. Argentina stands more and more alone and with the heat on. It's a very uncomfortable position.

Colonel Perón, resplendent in white tunic and oozing personality, made his highly publicized appearance on Calle Florida yesterday morning, at the popular promenade hour, surrounded by a bevy of theatre, film and radio stars, brandishing money boxes for the San Juan victims. There is not sufficient theatricality in the Argentine character for this publicity campaign to arouse either admiration or respect, and it's my opinion that the *Coronel's* shares have dropped considerably as a result of his prancing and preening. It offends the Argentine sense of dignity. The innate generosity of the Argentine people, however, has never before had so great a chance to prove itself. They are giving, and doing it generously, ungrudgingly and spontaneously, whatever they think of the Government's antics and mistakes.

Last night a benefit festival was given in Luna Park. The place was packed. At first there was a certain handclapping for official personages, but too many speeches curbed enthusiasm. The contrast between applause for *artistas* and for officials was notable. For instance, late in the program Alberto Castillo, *tango* singer (banned from the air by *Radiocomunicaciones* until he modified his style) was given an unprecedented ovation, which brought the house down. No sooner had he stepped on the platform than it began. Fortunately, Ramírez had already left. Speeches ran first. Ramírez improvised and very badly. It was very evident that a threat that he would take care of non-co-operators popped out of him before he had time to think, and he spent the rest of his speech trying to remedy the error. As an improvisation it was also a floundering *gaffe*. He talked about "improving this improvisation." Perón had apparently gone very well prepared to speak. They call him "Johnny Flute" (*Pfeiferhanelein*) explaining that's the way he's "affectionately known to his mentors at the German Embassy."

All the GOU battles of the past must be fading into nothingness compared to the one that is going on now. The temperature has been run up another dozen degrees and a majority of the inner circle of the regime are said to be convinced that a break with the Axis will have to be made, possibly before the end of the week. No one can quite figure out just who is in favor of taking the plunge and who still insists upon waiting and trying to find a solution. One story says Perón fights the break, partially because he wanted to have it come about in such a way so that he would get the credit. Others insist Presidential Secretary Gonzalez is the chief opponent. In any case, the most important thing is that the screws are being made tighter and tighter and that even though the regime will not change its internal policy one bit, it may be forced to at least cut the Gordian knot linking it with the Axis.

The United States has decided not to recognize Bolivia's new military government and the blow hits Argentina's military regime just as much as it smacks Bolivia. With the announcement from Washington came dispatches from Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala. Our State Department says that it has "been aware that subversive groups hostile to the Allied cause have been plotting disturbances against American Governments operating in defense of the hemisphere against Axis aggression." It charges the Bolivian Government was overthrown by force under circumstances linking this action with these subversive groups. "The most important and urgent question arising from this development in Bolivia is the fact that this is but one act committed by a general subversive movement, having for its purpose steadily expanding activities on the continent. These developments, viewed in the light of information the American Republics have been exchanging among themselves, dispose negatively of the matter of the United States Government's recognizing the present revolutionary *Junta* at La Paz. The inter-American system, built up over the past ten years, has had for one of its purposes, the defense of the sovereign Republics of the hemisphere against aggression or intervention in their domestic affairs by influences operating outside the hemisphere and outside their individual frontiers."

Washington's statement ends with a hope that the "freedom-loving

people of the American Republics, including those of Bolivia, who have the good will of the Government and people of the United States, will understand this decision as taken in furtherance of the aforesaid purpose."

The announcement brings a public moan of pain from Bolivia's new confidential agent in Washington, Fernando Iturralde, who calls it "a great injustice." He gives assurance, nevertheless, that Bolivian officials will "continue to work tirelessly for the things in which we believe with the hope that our efforts will eventually bring the reward of understanding and faith in our cause from other sovereign nations." He further insists the Bolivian *Junta* was a popular movement whose first concern was "to assure greatest co-operation for the United States and the other democracies, adherence to the Atlantic Charter and desire for closer economic co-operation." He cited measures against the Jap and Axis firms, adding: "This movement has been misunderstood either through lack of full knowledge of its aims or through listening only to the groups unfriendly to us. We are no menace to any democratic nation. On the contrary, we seek to promote the democratic welfare." But no one seems to be paying much attention to Iturralde, for the issue is far bigger.

The refusal of all the American Republics but Argentina to recognize Bolivia should certainly help frustrate the plans for similar military coups elsewhere in the Americas and further isolate Argentina. It may be just the additional push needed to swing the Argentine seesaw and force a break in relations.

JANUARY 25th

Argentina's on edge today over the possibility of a break with the Axis. But nothing can yet be said in the papers about it, even though stories appeared in the New York dailies this morning and were retransmitted back here by the press services. They got no further than the incoming cable desks, however. Radio people have been warned to say nothing, but the Montevideo broadcasters, not bound by such restrictions, have been announcing a break is coming, that Foreign Minister Gilbert has resigned and that the confirmation will be announced shortly. The Cabinet is to meet this afternoon and an official

communiqué is promised for this evening. Last night, we understand, the top shots of the GOU were in lengthy session, but what, if any, decision they reached is not yet known.

(Later)

A break with the Axis is definite. It is not yet proclaimed officially, but you don't need any crystal ball to know that tonight's screaming headlines that "Argentina's hospitality has been betrayed" and that a "vast espionage ring has been discovered," are as definite as anything that could be asked. Newspaper editors were called in to the Under-Secretariat of Press and Information this afternoon and told they might splash the news across their front pages, emphasizing the hospitality angle and also stressing that the Government had "taken energetic measures." Editors who thought they'd have nothing more exciting to report than a mass in Plaza Congreso in honor of the San Juan earthquake victims, rushed back to their offices, got out the big type they've been saving ever since Pearl Harbor, and went to town.

Crítica was particularly gleeful, blowing up one of its ugliest pictures of Hitler on the front page and explaining that *Der Fuehrer* "who until today had pretended to be a friend of our country, had actually been employing a policy of espionage whose activities are now completely understood by the Argentine Government." Inside were columns and columns about past cases of Axis espionage in Argentina. Fearful of going too far, *Crítica* confined most of these to incidents which occurred before the present regime took over, particularly spy activities during the term when Baron Hermann Von Thiermann was Ambassador to Argentina. Vice-President Farrell has flown back from inspection tour in the Southern lake region around Bariloche. The Cabinet is now in session. Papers recall the case of the *Graf Spee* sailors, the espionage denounced by the since-dissolved Congressional Committee which probed Axis activities, the work of German Naval Attaché Captain Dietrich Niebuhr. *Pampero*, which always sells more copies than usual on such occasions as this (curious *porteños* want to hear what the other side has to say) mentions nothing but the return of Farrell.

(Later)

Ramírez spoke to the nation over all radio stations at nine o'clock tonight but confined himself entirely to steps taken to raise funds for San Juan. Everybody tuned in, expecting something really hot. All they got were vague generalities which had no connection with the Axis situation. The sudden headline barrage caught most people out on a limb. Many Argentines hadn't the least idea the Hellmuth case had any really great importance, but reading tonight's papers, they quickly grasped the fact that the *ambiente* was being prepared for a break in exactly the same way Hitler used to whip up the German people about alleged maltreatment of his ever-handly minorities, and they hardly know what to expect next. The inner Cabinet is supposed to be meeting tonight and a number of newspapers are staying up, hoping to get the break—both ways.

The San Juan tragedy is practically pushed out of the window, although this morning's mass held in the vast plaza leading up to the steps of Congreso drew out a crowd of thousands, most of them employees from offices ordered closed for the occasion.

Great Britain has decided not to recognize the new Bolivian Government. The news is not unexpected and neither is Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's announcement that information in British hands "demonstrates that this event is related to the activities of subversive groups hostile to the cause of the United Nations, which are working in Western Europe." British support for the Good Neighbor policy is important, for rivalry between Britain and the United States is certain to develop in Latin America after the war, and there's a difference between good healthy competition and using policy to aid business.

I learn from La Paz that the public there has received the non-recognition news quietly. The La Paz *Junta* apparently still hopes to prove its good intentions. *La Calle*, official newspaper of the revolutionary forces, charges that mining magnates and members of the deposed Peñaranda Government influenced the decisions taken abroad, but it's a weak excuse.

At ten o'clock this morning, the *Prensa* siren went off. A few minutes later the official announcement came over the air. Argentina has severed relations with the Axis because of "proofs provided by the Federal police regarding the existence of a vast espionage network to the detriment of countries closely linked to us by traditional ties and friendship. These criminal activities," the announcement added, "are directly attributable to the German and Japanese Governments; they are similar to others committed previously by agents at present awaiting trial. Continuance of these illicit activities makes the presence of the German and Japanese diplomatic representatives sheltered under diplomatic privileges, incompatible with the safety of the continent. The seriousness and persistence of the acts proved against them, together with the evident participation of foreign diplomatic representatives in espionage activities, make it necessary to re-define Argentine international policy in the light of new circumstances."

The President, it was added, would speak to the nation an hour and a half later. But even while the siren blew, the Buenos Aires public seemed almost indifferent. Police were on hand all over downtown Buenos Aires to prevent any demonstrations. The only crowd permitted was one down in Plaza Mayo where loudspeakers were being put up to allow the crowd to hear Ramírez' address. In front of the newspaper bulletin boards, the usual curious groups were perhaps doubled, but there was no cheering, no *vivas* and no great excitement.

Ramírez' speech emphasized the same points the newspaper editors had been instructed to play up—Argentina's hospitality had been violated . . . it was the local police and nobody else who had discovered the espionage . . . Argentine sentiments would be wounded by the continued presence of German and Japanese diplomatic representatives and, furthermore, "there can be no excuses; nor can there be any explanations which will justify the actions and plans of those who, within the Republic or in relation with her, conspire against her national sovereignty . . . We will never tolerate nor will we permit that ideologies contrary to our republican structure or to its guaranteed manifestations of sovereignty should take root in even one milimeter of Argentina's territory." There was more

talk about American unity but nothing to really get your teeth into.

The notes to the Axis diplomatic representatives, German Chargé d'Affaires Meynen and Japanese Ambassador Baron Shutomii, also emphasized the investigations leading to discovery of espionage had been made by the Argentine Government, noting: "These activities were not only carried out for the benefit of the German Government, but were directly organized by that Government with the intervention of officials of that Embassy. Under these circumstances, and taking into account the systematic repetition of these activities which threatened the sovereignty and security of Argentina, this Government has arrived at the conclusion that it is impossible to maintain diplomatic relations." General Gilbert's official statement regarding the German spy organization gives comparatively few details but emphasizes the same points. The military is determined to claim the credit and not let the move appear forced and, all in all, that's probably just as well.

The public is asking plenty of questions. How severe will the roundup of Axis spies, saboteurs and propagandists be, especially those operating under nationalist cloaks? Will the German firms—the big banks, the vast electrical, construction, financial, drug and other houses be immediately shuttered and taken over, or will they, as they have in some other Latin countries, be allowed to robe themselves in the Argentine flag and keep going? Will the doors now be opened for the pro-democratic forces who so far have been treated practically as enemies?

And, most important of all, what will be the internal situation? The question of the Spanish Falangist operations centering in Buenos Aires is also vital, for severance of ties with Berlin and Tokyo will still give Madrid a free hand.

The main effects of the Axis break will be the closing of the German and Japanese Embassies which have served as the diplomatically immune headquarters for basic Axis activities here, and the cutting of wireless, cable and telephone links with Berlin and Tokyo by which the Axis has had an open twenty-four-hour-a-day line over which to pass information. It's still early to tell how far Washington will go in extending Argentina the kind of Lend-Lease aid given Brazil and other Latin countries and how quickly the United States will be able to forget the past. What part Argentina

may have had in the creation of the unrecognized military Bolivian Government also causes plenty of comment.

Breath-taking versions of what really happened at last night's meeting of the GOU held behind heavily guarded doors in the Municipal Building now used by Perón's Secretariat are already going the rounds. The meeting started shortly after 6 P.M.; lasted until early this morning. At least fifty commanders of the various branches of the services attended and it must have been a hot and heavy session. One group, it's said, was prepared to organize a revolt to prevent the break. This was frustrated by the fact that Perón, and Colonel Ramírez who supported him, turned against the move, despite the oath they had previously taken to maintain relations at all costs. Although their organizations were officially dissolved a few weeks ago, four thousand nationalists stood at strategic points throughout the city, waiting for the order to march. Perón's defection altered all their plans—the Government was prepared to arrest the lot. General Gilbert, it is reported, brought to the meeting the dossier on Axis spy activities which the United Nations diplomats had handed in just before the San Juan earthquake. In one hand he had the decree breaking relations and in the other his resignation, explaining the Army chiefs could have one or the other. They demanded Gilbert stay. Some of the hotheads, it is reported, were quite prepared to accept war with the United States, if necessary.

Still another coup attempt to stir up the turbulent Latin maelstrom. The Paraguayan Government announces it has frustrated an attempted revolution at dawn today. A communiqué issued by the Ministry of the Interior of Asunción says units of the deposed Liberal Party and allied organizations tried to take possession of the police headquarters and the Army barracks. The guards were surprised, but nevertheless repelled the attempt after a short but violent fight. One of the coup leaders, Ayala Calderon of the Army Reserve, was killed. It is hard to imagine Argentina involved in this attempt since the Ramírez Government and that of General Morínigo have been so close. Yet the real leader of today's attempt, *Coronel Arturo Bray*, a retired Paraguayan Army officer, has been residing in exile in Buenos Aires and apparently left here only a few days ago. Paraguay says that several other members of the group have been identified and that the police will continue an investigation to "establish

responsibility and take immediate and decisive action against the disturbers of order." It will be hard to get further details out of tightly censored Paraguay.

JANUARY 27th

Pleasure, approval, but nothing remotely resembling unrestrained enthusiasm—that about sums up the reaction of the Argentine people to the sudden breaking of diplomatic relations. The pro-democratic press, which has been fighting and hoping for a break for a long time, this morning turns out the kind of superlatives which only Latin editorial framers and headline writers can produce. The Nazi-fascist sheets either confine themselves to straight reporting or weaseling. But the people, judged from a sampling of opinion in the cafés, talks with others in offices, clubs and homes, and idea and impression swapping with news and radio people, diplomats and proverbial ear-to-the-ground experts, get down to these points:

1) As in Washington, London and elsewhere, the mass of Argentine people are waiting for the next steps—the real rounding up of Axis spies, the closing down of totalitarian commercial activities and the energetic halting of propagandizing, espionage and sabotage. Frankly, most of them don't expect much.

2) The question of how far the military will go is one now tearing the GOÜ. Most Argentines can't see how the bitter-enders can remain in the Government. Resignations are expected. Some say the whole Cabinet will walk out, others that Foreign Minister Gilbert, strongly pro-Axis Public Instruction Minister Martinez Zuviria, and Finance Minister Ameghino, are to quit. There are tales that some of these ministers are already under protective arrest.

3) Despite all the efforts of the Ramirez regime to attribute the break to discovery of a spy ring by their own police, the people know that the move was involuntary, which is a bitter pill for many, even those with pro-democratic sentiments, to swallow. National pride has been hurt. "If they had done it last June or even before the note exchange between Hull and Storni, it would have been different," they say.

4) There's also a strong impression that Secretary Hull still holds

the turncrew to compel further action; the information linking the military with the Bolivian and other anti-democratic plotting in South America. So far all the people have been told is about the arrest of Consul Hellmuth. Whatever information the United States and the other Latin-American Republics exchanged before deciding not to recognize Bolivia is, Argentines feel, known throughout the hemisphere.

5) "Now we'll never get rid of the military!" is another common reaction from strongly pro-democratic Argentines. They hoped that something might have occurred to force out the increasingly totalitarian-minded regime, break with the Axis and restore democracy at the same time. The fact that one has come without the other means the military will be able to retain its power for longer, especially if it outwardly gives evidence of pro-United Nations co-operation.

6) Many Argentines have been so conditioned to neutrality, to the fact that it has brought them advantages of abundant food, practically no rationing, continued trade from their own brightly painted merchant vessels, etc., that a sudden break has stunned them. Pro-Axis nationalists have already started planting rumors that "this will mean prices are bound to rise, as the United States will require more of Argentina's food production," that "taxes will go up as a result of the need to spend more for defense," that boats will be sunk and even that the Nazis will try an outright attack on Buenos Aires. The percentage of truth in any of these makes no difference so far as the rumor and hate-building purposes are concerned.

7) Demonstrations have been prohibited, strict order imposed and papers advised just how they should play up the news. *Critica* has already been suspended for three days for an over-enthusiastic we've-been-saying-this-for-years editorial. But *Pampero* goes on.

8) Those most pleased are the truly pro-democratic Argentines of whom there are many, the pro-democratic business men who feel that restrictions now hampering United States-Argentine trade may be lifted and the far-seeing Argentines who hope to see their country truly line up with the democracies.

From what we gathered here, reaction abroad has also been somewhat more restrained than back in June. Cordell Hull's press conference statement that he presumed Argentina would adopt

"other measures" is allowed to be printed, but under small headlines. Hull refused to say whether Argentina's action might cause the United States to reconsider its position on the Bolivian recognition, adding he had seen too many persons get into trouble by talking too much and prematurely and that he would rather not say anything further on the subject at this time. I agree. British reaction also appears restrained, but Reuter's account from London seems designed to try to convince Argentina that Britain knew a break was going to come all along. Ambassador Armour and Britain's Ambassador Kelly both give out almost identical statements, which fact causes more comment than their assertion that the news "would undoubtedly be received with gratification" in their respective capitals.

JANUARY 28th

Communications with the Axis have been definitely cut and commercial and financial interchange with Berlin and Tokyo ordered suppressed. *Pampero* has also been closed, practically by invitation of its bitterly resentful editor, Enrique Oses. All of this has had a good effect, but there's still a strange atmosphere in Buenos Aires, an atmosphere compounded partly of a sense of shame that the break had to come about this way and partly of resentment from nationalists and middle-of-the-road Argentines who saw advantages in their country's long hemisphere fence-sitting. Ramírez' statement yesterday warning extremists who would deny liberties to others against making "any attempt to take advantage of the situation" is particularly emphasized by *Prensa*, which has picked out this section of his speech, apparently in the hope it means nationalists cannot be allowed to continue under cover. But the speech can be read many ways and people are interpreting it according to their own sentiments.

"They've broken and *el Presidente* promises, so let's give them a chance," says one group. "Yes," says an even larger number, "they've broken. But only under pressure and the promises are the same kind they've made before."

Guarded as some of the press reactions from the States reprinted

here have been, the comment and the statements of various British, American and Latin leaders are far more enthusiastic than are the second-thoughts of the Argentine people. The Government's decision to maintain "*tranquilidad*," its continued touchiness over any inference that its action was not simply the result of discovering that "Argentine hospitality and sovereignty had been violated," makes it apparent to most observers that the military intends going its own way as long as possible.

Official reason given for the *Pampero* closing is of special interest and has caused plenty of talk. *Pampero's* method of achieving its farewell bow was to splash top headlines over its front page quoting the military's original June 4th promises of continued neutrality and explaining that breaking relations was a complete turn from tradition. In padlocking *Pampero*, the Presidential Secretariat said that "No Argentine has the right to doubt the word of the First Magistrate," even apparently if he turns on those who thought him their best pal. There is no doubt but that anybody who pokes into the Government's locked closets again will get the same treatment.

Some additional facts are beginning to leak out about the extent of Axis spy activities here. Apparently there have been two main groups of German spies, one reporting directly to the Nazi Embassy and the other headed by Hitler's personal agent, reputedly a Herr Harnisch, who owns a small factory out near the *Seis de Septiembre* airport in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. He has been here a long time and, I understand, is married to an Argentine and has two sons. If the authorities are really serious about cleaning out the Axis spies, they possibly can use the old detective trick of putting one group against the other to force out confessions. Japanese spy activities have also been rarely investigated.

Holding his press conference a day before scheduled time, Ramírez yesterday told the newsmen that he did not consider this the moment to go into all the measures which might be taken to implement the breaking of relations, but he did emphasize that the step was directed against governments, not individuals, and that "The great majority of Germans and Japanese resident in this country will repudiate and condemn, as severely as have the Argentines, their Government's attitude," as if anxious to keep their good will. He promised no exceptional steps would be taken against

them "unless, by their behavior they have failed to understand our aims and thus become unworthy of our confidence." Later on, again letting the world know the break meant no change in internal policy, he said purely national problems could not be dealt with on the basis of ideology. The dissolution of political parties, he added, does not mean that the Government thinks political opinion should not group itself in accordance with its sentiments. "The moment will arrive when political tendencies can be organized and prepared to face the future."

JANUARY 29th

General Rawson, a constant headache to the colonels ever since June 4th, has again pushed his way into the midst of things and raised a row which may cause trouble. In a congratulatory letter to Ramírez, Rawson, wrapping himself in the mantle of "chief of the revolution," conveyed his congratulations on the Axis break, declaring it fulfilled "one of the fundamental principles of the revolution; returning to the nation with all firmness its historic mission among the Americas." Routine stuff it might appear, but since the colonels have never accepted Rawson as anything more than the officer who marched at the head of the troops, the answer was not long in bouncing back. Ramírez himself did not even deign to reply. Instead, Colonel Gonzalez sent back a stinging reply—copies to all the papers—which said, in part, that the President, in the interests of truth, was "obliged to remind the Ambassador that the revolution had no other chiefs than those of the Army and Navy, nor any other purpose than the recovery and strengthening of Argentina's sovereignty." Furthermore, the revolution was "conceived for eminently patriotic reasons and did not have, nor could it ever have had, as one of its purposes, the rupture of relations with one of the belligerent parties, for it has always been the traditional policy of the country to maintain peace and harmony with all the people of the world."

Rawson's answer to this—not yet allowed to be published—is his resignation and a repeated insistence that he is right. From the beginning, he heatedly asserts, the revolution was made to "restore Argentina to the community of her American sisters through

the faithful fulfilment of her pacts and international treaties. Not to proclaim this now would be to detract from its historic importance. I resigned the office which you now occupy to avoid violence which would have given the impression of a fight for power and with the purpose of maintaining an increasing respect to the country toward its armed forces. But I cannot resign the part I played and which Your Excellency knows. Today, at a moment when I believed myself spiritually nearer to your Government, I find that I am even more distant than ever."

I am rather inclined to believe that Rawson would have broken relations with the Axis if he had remained President, but the colonels have no desire to build him up or to let anyone get the impression that cutting the links with Berlin and Tokyo was one of their aims. Their story is that everything was just dandy until *they* discovered the Axis had been operating here and that it was for this reason the break was suddenly necessary.

Some of the more violent pro-Axis officials up in the city of Tucumán have been going to great pains to show just how they feel about the break. The Municipal Commissioner in Tucumán, Federico Marcelo Ibarguren, issued a decree that the sudden change was the result of pressure from international capitalists and ordered all flags flown at half-mast for a week, as a sign of mourning for Argentina. The Interventor of the National University of Tucumán, Santiago de Estrada, joined right in with his Axis pal, ordered the college closed for a period of seven days by way of mourning "for the humiliation implied by the Government's decree ceding to foreign influence." Regardless of how many of the *militares* agree with the idea of putting flags at half-mast, it's pretty certain that the Administration will have to do something by way of reprimanding Ibarguren and Estrada.

JANUARY 30th

The behind-the-scenes battle which has threatened to upset the regime seems to have ended in a truce, at least a temporary one. The top leaders of the GOU have signed a public letter to Ramírez expressing their confidence and solidarity and further chastising

Rawson for his statement that he (Rawson) was the real leader of the revolution and that breaking with the Axis was the underlying motive. The colonels say they might have ignored Rawson's statements, which they "attributed to mistaken estimation of the true facts, but insistent repetition of them, disproved by events, obliges us, who were actors in the event, to deviate from this traditional line of conduct." The final paragraph of their letter contains one of those back-handed compliments which the colonels seem constantly to toss at Ramírez. "Though it is true, as you yourself have stated, that the revolution did not have any other chiefs than the officers of the Army and Navy, nor any other purpose than that of restoring and safeguarding our national sovereignty, it is also the truth that—and this we proclaim under our word of honor as soldiers and Argentines—that you were and are the brain and nerve of that historical movement." In other words, there was no head, but it was Ramírez. Which means that for the time being Ramírez will continue as the front man.

Tomorrow we leave Argentina, and this chapter of *Argentine Diary* at last closes. We leave a country which has not yet seen the kind of blackout that we expect to find when we reach our destination, but we cannot help but feel that Argentina's bright lights are blanketed out by a much deeper one, and the lights will not so easily switch on again. The concentration camps, the regimentation, the repression, the abolition of Congress and of free speech, the incipient racial discrimination and the jailings—these have not really hurt so far. Or at least they have not bitten deep enough into the soul of this people. For the military have worked on much the same technique as the torturers of the Middle Ages, granting their victims enough of a breathing spell between each experiment—but gradually sapping away their will to resistance.

But there is still hope in my heart for Argentina—for the real Argentina. As I leave I note signs that prove the people are getting their second wind. And their determination to free their country is developing, not so much in busy, self-centered Buenos Aires alone, but out in the *pampa*, in the cities of the interior, among students and the working classes and among the saner pro-democratic elements of the Army itself. How soon it will come someone else will have to report. This is my *adios*.

Ramírez went the way of Castillo in February. And the State Department in Washington refused to recognize General Farrell, his successor, as the head of the legal government of Argentina. The difference between Ramírez and Farrell was the monumental difference between Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum. But the change in nominal "Presidents" gave the State Department a good opportunity to repair its earlier mistake in according recognition to the Perón Junta when it bore the name of the Ramírez Government. At the moment it is still very hot news.

But a much bigger news story broke earlier in the same month, and this one died after a day. I have it before me as I write. It is a copyrighted story out of Washington, and it has not been repudiated by the Government. Moreover, it is a story I had already heard from a responsible Latin-American diplomat.

Briefly, the story asserts that the State Department report on the Bolivian revolution contained documented evidence proving that one, Luis Aranguren, transmitted funds and instructions from Nazis and fascists in Buenos Aires to the ringleaders of the fascist rebel Junta in La Paz. What makes this story so hot is the fact that Señor Aranguren happens to be the chief of the Spanish Falange in Bolivia. He is also the Secretary of the Spanish Legation in La Paz.

Of what real avail, then, was the hemispheric break with Germany, Japan, and Mussolini's Italy? Spain is also an Axis nation, and, in Latin-American affairs, Spain is a most important Axis nation. Hitler still can and does reach into Latin-American nations through the Spanish Falange and the Spanish commercial and diplomatic offices.

Marshall Goering once said that "Spain is the key to two continents." He knew what he was saying.

Today Argentina and Bolivia head the fascist parade in Latin America. But they march to a tune played by the band in Madrid—and the tune is called by Berlin. This march will not end until Spain is once again a democratic nation.

SPECIAL INDEX TO

Argentine Diary

BY Ray Josephs*

WITH A FOREWORD BY ALLAN CHASE†

RANDOM HOUSE believes you will be interested in seeing the wide range of subjects covered by *Argentine Diary*. We have, therefore, printed this special section which will be the index to the book.

* Ray Josephs was the Buenos Aires correspondent for *PM*, the *Chicago Sun* and *Variety* for almost five years. He left the country, with the Argentine secret police hot on his trail, when they discovered the book was to be published.

† Allan Chase is the author of *Falange*.

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Trouble For Good Neighbors

ARGENTINE DIARY, by Ray Josephs (358 pages; Random House, New York).

THIS is a published diary, and because of its form it may be a little difficult for some readers, but it should be read for all of that because it is a significant treatise on the situation not only in Argentina but in all of Latin America.

The author, Ray Josephs, war correspondent for PM and Variety during the 1943-44 period covered by the book. His daily observations add up to an important comment on the hemispheric problems. He watched the colonels' clique take control and here are sketches of the chief figures of that group. He recognized the danger of the military movement in Argentina, and at the same time witnessed the harm done by Senator Butler's misinformed article in the Reader's Digest.

One ray of brightness is his firm belief that 80 per cent of the people of Argentina are firmly for democracy. But he gives no hint of when this ideal ever will be achieved for them.

P. I. W.

Ray Josephs was born and educated in Philadelphia, and his first job was for a Philadelphia paper. In 1940 he sailed to South America for a three-month visit. Once there, he succumbed to the charm of the country, went to work on the Buenos Aires *Herald* and settled down to study the people and their politics.

Later, he became correspondent for *PM*, *Variety* and the Chicago *Sun*, and his dispatches to these publications have been outstanding for their intimate and authentic knowledge of the Argentine scene. Time and again he has called the turn on the military dictators and their fascist intrigues. Recently, to escape arrest by the politicians he has consistently exposed, he has had to flee the country. Now on neutral soil he is able for the first time to tell the true story of the coming of fascism to Latin America.

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